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ABSTRACT

Student acquisition of reading and language arts skills was monitored ethnographically in a study of several schools in a largely black setting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Fundamental to this extensive study was the development and maintenance of cooperative relationships with the urban schools being investigated. The ethnographic monitoring process itself involved three steps: (1) consultation with teachers to identify issues of concern; (2) observation of behavior relevant to these issues; and (3) the sharing of findings with teachers and school officials. The acquisition of reading and language skills was examined from several perspectives which included community involvement, parent teacher relations, instructional techniques, and administrative effect. It was intended that the results of these inquiries would be provided to school personnel and regarded as contributions in a mutual research effort. This reciprocal relationship between researchers and school personnel was evaluated and suggestions were made to improve the efficacy of their interaction. (APM)

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ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING
PROJECT: FINAL REPORT
VOLUME I

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ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING OF CHILDREN'S ACQUISITION OF READING/LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

Dell H. Hymes, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Final Report

to

The National Institute of Education

Marcia Whiteman, Ph.D.
Project Monitor

February 5, 1981

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I
I. Mode of Inquiry
II. Development of Relationships with Schools
III. School Leaders as Participants in Research
IV. Individual Reports
    A. Harriet Tubman School: Community Perspectives (Davis)

VOLUME II
    B. Shortridge School and Community: Portrait of the Principal (Anderson)
    C. Shortridge School and Community: Teacher-Parent Relationships (Watkins)
    D. Shortridge School and Community: Attitudes and Admission to Literacy (Gilmore)
    E. Shortridge School and Community: Boy's Verbal Abilities (Lussier)
    F. Spaulding School: Attention and Styles of Interaction (May)

VOLUME III
    G. Commodore School: Teaching Writing: One Teacher's Experience (Woods-Elliot)
    H. Commodore School: Unofficial Writing (Fiering)
V. General Findings (Smith)
VI. Ethnographic Monitoring: A Way to Understanding By Those Who Are Making Schooling Work

I. MODE OF INQUIRY

The purpose of this project has been three-fold:

(1) to contribute to our knowledge of teaching and learning;

(2) to develop and sustain cooperative relationships with a set of schools in a largely Black urban setting;

(3) to employ a mode of inquiry compatible with the demands of both knowledge and cooperation.

Our term for such a mode of inquiry has been "ethnographic monitoring" (cf. Hymes 1979). As practiced in this project, ethnographic monitoring has three steps:

(a) consult teachers (or principals) to identify an issue of concern to them;

(b) observe behavior relevant to that issue in a series of contexts in and out of the classroom;

(c) share the findings with the teacher (or principal).

The point of the first step is to ensure that the focus of study is meaningful to the school. One does not want to impose a definition of problem that is unrelated to problems perceived by teachers and principals. At the same time, we believe that systematic observation can contribute new knowledge. That is the purpose of the second step. Teachers and principals have the opportunity to develop insight into the instructional process of which they are a part, but, like any of us, must view it from a particular vantage point within it. By tracing behavior through a series of contexts to which the teacher or principal does not have access, and by viewing behavior in the classroom independently, one may be able to shed new light on an issue. One cannot and should not consider such findings only as contributions to knowledge for its own sake, to scholarly literature and careers. The purpose of the third step is to make the findings the possession of the school people who have contributed to their discovery.

The three steps overlap in time. The researchers and the school personnel interact in a variety of ways, professional and personal. Sometimes there is significant interaction and sharing of findings in the very midst of observation (see the report by Woods-Elliott (IV,G.)). Sometimes preliminary findings stimulate experiments in curriculum (see Fiering (IV,H.)). Sometimes research stops as all concerned mobilize to oppose the threatened closure of the school (see May (IV.F.)). And the end of the project does not imply an end to interaction. Some of the researchers are continuing their work, past the formal closing date, so as to provide more extended, intensive studies, and these products will be shared. The several schools, and the Graduate School of Education, see the project as one part of a larger, continuing relationship. (Section II describes this more fully.)

The three steps are straightforward, and in themselves may not distinguish this mode of inquiry from others. The logic of the steps, as we understand them, makes assumptions that may not be generally shared. These assumptions derive from anthropology.

(a) In starting with issues identified by people in the schools, we assume that such people have some of the knowledge that is sought. In describing a kinship system, an anthropologist depends upon knowledge and understanding already possessed by its participants. In describing a language, one attempts to model a knowledge that speakers of the language already implicitly command. To be sure, a complete description may go beyond what any one person knows or can say; none will be likely to experience the kinship system or the language from every standpoint and in every context. The anthropologist will attempt to be comprehensive. And of course he or she will bring to the description an understanding of what kinship systems and languages in general are like, together with frames of reference for making them explicit. The point is that the final result depends upon knowledge of two kinds, that of the investigator, and that of those among whom he inquires. Both are essential. That is why the older term "informant" is being replaced by "consultant" in anthropology. The term "consultant" more accurately reflects the cooperative nature of the relationship. And as will be seen (III), consultants may themselves be researchers.

The outcome of research may confirm the understandings already held by a consultant, such as a principal or teacher, supporting them with an independent range of observations and evidence. The final result may complement the consultant's understandings, bringing to them observations and evidence to which he or she did not have access. And the result may run counter to prior understandings. Issues that seem to have a certain interpretation in one setting may take on additional dimensions, when observed in a variety of settings and from other points of view.

All three kinds of result have emerged in this project. The principal at Shortridge has a rather finely-tuned knowledge of the human relationships in the situations with which he deals (IV.B.), and his sense of his standing in the community is largely confirmed (IV.B.). Teachers at Spaulding are aware of, and articulate about, quite fine-grained aspects of attention (IV.F.).

At the same time, some occasions of inattention have a content pertinent to instruction that the classroom situation can prevent teachers from noticing (IV.F.). Similarly, systematic observation may show that the role of writing in children's lives goes considerably beyond what usually comes to the notice of the teacher (IV.H). Finally, the point of view of other parties to a relationship, and direct observation of their circumstances, may challenge a picture built up without such input (IV.C.).

(b) The point of the second step is to ensure that the results of the study are true to the meanings that events and activities have for those who participate in them. Insofar as the behavior in question is that of children, one must try to understand its place in the lives of the children. A single setting is inadequate. Are certain children shy? talkative? One must ask whether the impression of shyness or talkativeness is particular to a certain context. Would the children still be that way, or be that way to the same degree, if the context changed? If they were in the hall, in the playyard, on the street, at home? With another adult present, or no adult present? And so on. What children are like, and what abilities they show, vary with context. They are just like everyone else in that respect, of course; the graduate student who passes an examination taken home, but not one under pressure of time in class; the middle-class woman who can perform stories animatedly with a few friends of similar gender and background, but not otherwise; and so on. Even though we know this to be true of others and ourselves, we still often formulate pictures and judgements of others on the basis of the one setting in which we know them. We cannot perhaps do much else, but ethnographic observation of a series of settings can help provide a truer picture, a more accurate judgment, of abilities and habitual conduct.

Study of this kind must be empirical and patient. If we are to be true to the meanings that events and activities have for their participants, then certainly we cannot assume we know those meanings in advance. Nor can we even assume that participants can tell us. Even if they can tell us, they may not want to, or may not want to at first. And much of meaningful behavior of anyone is not available to consciousness for report to others. The manifold complexities of language are practiced skillfully every day by people who cannot name them, and indeed, have no need to name them. Much the same is true of much of the rest of everyday behavior. We may be jolted into observation and reflection when something goes wrong, but the very point of customary behavior is that it can be taken for granted, while we focus our attention on the main purpose in hand. A tennis player who has to think about how he makes a shot in the middle of a match is in trouble. One reason tennis players have coaches is to be able to draw on systematic observation, of a sort the player cannot make. A principal, a teacher, meeting the challenges of a school day, is in somewhat the same situation, and can find useful the observations of someone not themselves the focus of what is going on.

Regularities and meanings, then, may take patient observation to discover. One wants as much as possible to let them emerge, rather than to run the risk of imposing them. Precise definition of what it is one is observing itself is shaped by this process. Terms such as "attention" and "writing" point to aspects of behavior, but observation of those aspects may raise questions as to just what is to be counted as an instance. The shape of the problem studied evolves in the course of inquiry. This on-going, processual nature of the inquiry is a major reason for the use of a processual term, "monitoring", in naming it. In monitoring activities in the classroom and community, one seeks to discover what counts in fact as caring for children on the part of a principal; as being involved with their children's education on the part of a parent; as having a poor attitude on the part of a student; as paying attention; as understanding the meaning of writing; etc. And when, and to whom?

(c) The point of the third step is more than courtesy. Of course, it is necessary and proper to provide school personnel with copies of the research. The ideal toward which we work is that copies of research will not be skimmed and filed, but regarded as contributions to continuing mutual inquiry.

One reason for continuing mutual inquiry is to continue to be a resource to each other, as neighbors in the same city with a common commitment to the improvement of education in it. There is a fundamental scholarly reason as well. We believe that understanding of a school and community takes time. One project is not enough, as a basis for advice to practitioners, or as a basis for firm conclusions about the phenomena studied. Research should not be hit-and-run, but cumulative.

The anthropological ground of ethnography leads to this view. On the one hand, concern not to impose a priori models does not apply only to particular classrooms and behaviors; it applies to a school and community as a whole. Practice and science are both best served by findings that are fully informed by the configurations of people and activity, the textures of life, that are particular to the given school. On the other hand, concern for locally valid findings makes one aware of how different from anthropology educational research tends to be in what is considered valuable. The world studied by anthropologists is populated by named societies and cultures, to whose understanding a series of studies and scholars may contribute. If someone finds out something new about the Navajo, say, it is proper to publish it for just that reason. It counts as knowledge, and it counts as part of the scholar's bibliography. Greater understanding of the Navajo is a legitimate activity.

That is not true for schools. If someone finds out something new about Shortridge, or Commodore, or Spaulding, or Harriet Tubman, it is not for that reason alone considered legitimate focus for continuing study. Now, while neighboring schools may be more alike than neighboring tribes, they are not identical. School people are often aware of such differences, can comment on them, and take them into account in considering where they would or would not like to be assigned. Certainly schools differ in terms of social class, race, and region of the country, as well as religious affiliation, if any, or the role of religion in the life of students. There are distinct types of school in terms of these broad dimensions, and schools which are broadly alike in terms of these dimensions are likely still to differ. Different histories, traditions, leaders, population movements, resources and constituencies, all may shape something with a certain configuration and texture of its own.

Educational research has tended to define problems in terms of variables common to all schools. Even close-grained studies of classroom interaction may read as if drawn from the same closed universe: one teacher, a large number of children, a blackboard, a reading series, and the like. The limitations of such research appear when replications lead to contradictory results. The hypothesis is confirmed in seventeen schools, let us say, but disconfirmed in thirteen. Contradictory results suggest to the anthropologist that the set of thirty schools did not constitute a homogeneous universe. Perhaps the schools in which the hypothesis was confirmed were of one type, and those in which it was disconfirmed of another type. Perhaps closer study of the configuration and texture of each school, closer attention to the social context of the variables, would have shown the studied phenomenon to take on different meaning in each type. Perhaps, even, a distinction between just two types would be too gross. Perhaps, even, the same outcome (positive or negative) could have resulted for different reasons, reasons which it would be valuable to know, since they would help one anticipate whether or not the same schools would show the same outcome on a second intervention. Fine-grained understanding of social context might show that the same result would occur if a second phenomenon resembled the first in certain respects, but not others, and that the resemblances that would produce the result were not the same for all the schools. In effect, one would be looking at each school as a system (or at each school in its community as a system), and seeking greater precision in the understanding of each system, and type of system. In the course of this project we have come to sense that each of the schools shares to a different degree and in a different way in the major changes affecting the relation of Black citizens to schooling in the city in the last two or three decades. Common ingredients and issues can be identified, as a frame of reference, but their working out in each school is distinct.

We glimpse here the other side of ethnographic study, the comparative side. Most discussion of ethnography focusses on its concern for intensive observation and openness to the character of the particular site. It is important to bear in mind that the observation and openness should be informed by understanding of the kinds of thing to be expected, so that one can discriminate what is common and what is unique. Interpretation should be true to the evidence of the specific site, but informed by a broader background. The present project has had the disadvantage of several foci in several schools, investigated by students necessarily working part-time, so that there has not been as great a depth as one might wish across the board. The advantage has been that a single school, or set of classrooms, did not become the whole world. The study of separate phenomena at more than one school, and the inclusion of the perspectives of a principal and of parents, lays a surer foundation for adequate knowledge of the wholes of which the particular phenomena are a part.

The long-term goal of the cooperative relationship with the set of schools is to build together a cumulative knowledge of each in relation to the whole. Where the results confirm expectations, schools and parents may feel their insights legitimated and act on them perhaps with greater confidence. Where the results are unexpected, the framework in which they were obtained, one of starting with issues identified by teachers, and continuing cooperation, may make findings more acceptable and likely to be utilized.[1]

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[1] These issues are discussed in chapters 3 through 6 of Hymes 1980.

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II. DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

This project has been made possible by the cooperation of the schools with which it is concerned. Such cooperation is not to be taken for granted. Schools and parents, particularly perhaps Black parents, are unwilling to participate in studies which do not benefit them. Advancement of knowledge in the abstract is insufficient reason for them to give of their time. In addition, research suggests to many that they are being made the objects of an experiment. (A fifth-grade child raised just that question early in the project.) Understandably, they find that demeaning.

Had this project been an isolated effort, a one-shot affair, cooperation might not have been given. There was, however, a prior history of relations between the schools and the Graduate School of Education, and there was a commitment to a continuing relationship. The sense of cooperation did not depend entirely on the project itself. That seems to us especially important. A single study may not honestly be able to promise sizeable benefit. A study that is part of a continuing relationship may be able to provide a portion of the benefit of that relationship to both parties, in ways that go beyond particular findings. In a phrase, access depends upon mutuality.

Prior history. The relevant recent history begins with the establishment of a University-Related Schools Project in 1969. This project attempted to make university resources (professors, student teachers, curriculum materials) formally available to interested public school faculties of the District within which the University is located (Philadelphia District 1). The project lasted some four years. During that time, a number of faculty in the Graduate School of Education worked with teaching staffs of the public schools. Many student teachers were placed in these schools for the final phase of their training (continuing an existing practice). Reading supervisors and specialists were provided to assist with the reading programs mandated by the Philadelphia School Board. The faculty of Reading/Language Arts and Teacher Education helped to develop "open education programs" in a number of the schools. At any one time from ten to fifteen schools were involved in this association.

In 1972-1973 difficulties arose as to the funding of some of these efforts. In almost all cases the University contributions had been without cost to the School District. The position of a Director of the University-Related Schools Project, however, became the focus of financial and political concern. These problems led to the dismissal of the Director, and the relationship between the local schools and the Graduate School returned to an informal status. Student teachers and reading specialists continued to be placed in the schools, and various University faculty continued to be called upon to assist principals and teachers. Much the same informal relationship continues today.

In 1974-1975 the Graduate School of Education was between Deans. The search for a new Dean was accompanied by debate as to the future of the School. In the spring the President and Provost stated a set of options that included closing the School. Although the administration insists that its most extreme thought was merely change in status from School to Department, the idea that the School was threatened with closure gained the greatest publicity. (For some years afterwards it was assumed by some that the School had been or would be closed.) The support of alumni and local school people was a major factor in convincing the administration that the School should be retained as such, and the search for a Dean reopened.

The appointment of a new Dean to a five-year term in 1975 coincided with a major effort by the Superintendent of Schools in Philadelphia, Matthew Costanzo, to improve the leadership of principals. At that time school administrators in the District belonged to the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, and the contract of the Association with the School Board called for the payment of up to 50 percent for courses taken to improve personal leadership ability. The contract played an important part in enabling local principals and administrators to attend the Graduate School of Education. (In complementary fashion, when a school cooperates in the training of a student teacher or reading specialist, a scholarship (now $400) is awarded by the Graduate School to help defray the cost of courses taken at it.)

In May of 1975 Domenic Matteo, principal of one of the schools in District 1, contacted William Castetter, Professor of Educational Administration, leading to the establishment of a seminar program during 1975-1976 for District 1 school administrators. The special program was coordinated by Dr. Castetter and Dr. Richard Heisler, and others of the faculty, particularly Morton Botel and James Larkin, participated in it. The latter two addressed themes that would shortly be joined in a second special program that has been an immediate context for the present research project. Dr. Botel discussed the development of a Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading Plan, on which he had been working with Richard Gibboney. Dr. Larkin spoke to "The Principal as an Educational Leader in the School."

The Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading Plan began with a phone call in January 1976 from Willimina Taylor (Communications Division, Bureau of Teacher Education, Harrisburg (the state capital)) to Richard Gibboney of our faculty, informing him that Federal legislation for the Right-to-Read program requires a state plan for Reading and Language Arts, before a state can apply for Right-to-Read funds. Gibboney visited the State Department of Education to explore the development of such a plan, with Drs. Taylor, Helen McClaine and John Mehan. In early February he called Mort Botel of our faculty, and during the spring Botel drafted versions of a plan. The final outline was submitted to the state in December. Through the ensuing spring, the plan was presented to the Division of Teacher Education in Harrisburg and to a number of meetings throughout the state, before being finally approved and in April and May (1977) adopted. One of the people important to the acceptance of the plan by the state, John Mehan, had worked on an earlier program development for the state, The State Humanities Program, developed in Gibboney's office when he was assistant Commissioner of Education for the Commonwealth. Both plans shared an emphasis on a holistic view, as against, in the conventional Reading and Language Arts Curriculum emphasis on sub-skills and the breaking down of reading and writing activities into small units.

The Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading Plan (PCRP) became the focus of a new relationship between the Graduate School of Education and local principals. In the spring of 1977, Dr. Botel got in touch with Domenic Matteo a leader among the elementary school principals who had taken part in the seminar program begun in 1975-76, and continued in 1976-77. Botel raised with Matteo the possibility of implementing aspects of the PCRP in schools in West Philadelphia. Matteo raised with Botel the question, "Can I get my doctorate if I study the implementation of this program?" Botel replied, "Yes, I think you could." Matteo asked if a number of principals could join in such a program, and again the answer was that it seemed possible. After the lunch, Botel called Ezra Staples, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum Development for the Philadelphia school system, who gave general approval, and arranged later that day for Matteo and Botel to meet with the District One Superintendent, Dr. William Ross, who also gave general approval. With this groundwork, Botel (with occasional assistance from Larkin) sketched a doctoral program in which each of a group of about 20 principals and other administrators could undertake a course of study, leading to a dissertation focussed on the development and implementation of a reading and language arts program within the framework of the PCRP within each of their schools.

The doctoral program was extensively discussed and finally approved by the Executive Committee of the Graduate School of Education. Some faculty were concerned about departures from established rules as a lessening of standards, but others emphasized the unusual opportunity to work with neighboring schools. The evolution of the special doctoral program is a story in itself. Suffice it to say that the framework provided for the participants to meet with the relevant faculty whenever problems emerged. Unforeseen difficulties and changes occasionally arose, but shared understanding of the program as experimental and collaborative endured. Some faculty, including the Dean, saw the program as a model of what the School should offer employed educational personnel: a chance to draw on their own experience, in ways relevant to their work, providing a support group for each other. Given that the participants were holding full time jobs of considerable responsibility, concessions on some formalities seemed more than warranted. The traditional liberal arts image of the solitary scholar seemed quite inappropriate (and the difficulty with which many liberal arts students complete their doctorates, alone and employed, suggests that the pattern may not be very satisfactory for them either). The pattern of physics or engineering, in which students work together in laboratories to the completion of their doctorates, within a community of support, seemed more suitable. And the natural science pattern, by which students commonly worked on topics relevant to a problem or area of concern to a faculty member, made great sense too. If a group of doctoral students are finding out things their faculty mentor wants to know, the time and energy of supervising a number of students is much less a burden. The faculty member is not required to wrench his or her mind from one topic to another quite unrelated one again and again. Indeed, interest in what the doctoral candidate is discovering may be high. Moreover, by working together on related topics, doctoral candidates may deepen each others' insight into their respective cases. Recognition of similarities and contrasts in what each finds may push discovery further than it would go for someone working in isolation.

The development of the special doctoral program for administrators of West Philadelphia schools intersected with the ethnographic monitoring project in the following way. At meetings of the Linguistic Society of America in San Francisco at the end of December, 1976, Dean Hymes took part in special sessions on the contribution of linguistics to bilingual education. Dr. Sarita Schotta, then of the NIE staff, and involved with the special sessions, suggested to Dean Hymes that he should develop research of an ethnographic kind, concerned with language and equity in education. The suggestion was reiterated in mid-May (1977), and Dean Hymes, Jim Larkin and David Smith decided to try to prepare a proposal before a June 30 deadline.

The original proposal focussed upon language in relation to equity, bilingual, and bidialectal concerns. The William Penn School District seemed a good one in which to work. The Superintendent, Dr. Mark Nagy, was a graduate of Penn, and actively involved with it through one of the School Study Councils for which the Graduate School of Education was host. The District, recently constituted, was one in which integration of diverse communities, Black, Hispanic, and Anglo, was a focus of concern.

In March of 1978 it was reported that a revised proposal might be funded. The proposal was, of course, unsolicited, and by this time attention to bilingual and bidialectal matters seemed no longer to the fore. The aspect of the proposal which attracted interest was its general concern with an ethnographic approach to problems involving verbal abilities. By this time, also, the special doctoral program for administrators in West Philadelphia was nearing the end of its first year, successfully. In keeping with the principle of cooperation underlying the doctoral program, and a fundamental scholarly goal of making educational research cumulative, it seemed desirable to conduct the research in District One, focussing on schools whose principals were involved in the doctoral program. The revised proposal specified that the work would be done at three of these schools (identified as Shortridge, Commodore, and Spaulding in this report). Two of the three investigators for the project, Hymes and Larkin, were also two of the three-member doctoral committee for the principals for the three schools (the third member being Botel). And the third investigator (Smith) was to teach courses taken by the group of principals.

The three principals welcomed the additional relationship, and helped in choosing and gaining the cooperation of two teachers in each school.

The initial year of research led to a report in April 1979 that was the basis as well of a request for a second year of support. Although a letter indicating approval was received in May, various administrative delays resulted in final budget approval not being received until the fall. The work of the second year of the project did not begin until November 1979. At that time the special doctoral program provided a context for including a fourth school in the second year of work. A separate project funded by NIE had to do with effective Black schools. When the principal investigator, Dr. Mary Hoover, left the Graduate School of Education for personal reasons, her chief assistant, Ms. Norma Dabney, continued the project, aided by Ave Davis, and advised at times by David Smith. Once a second year of work became possible, it seemed desirable to give further support to Ms. Davis' work in the community associated with Harriet Tubman School, and to bring the work into relation to this project, conducted in schools not far from Harriet Tubman. Moreover, the principal of Harriet Tubman is also a participant in the special doctoral program, and through that had ties with faculty of a sort similar to those of the principals of the first three schools. As continuing participants, each had received four tuition credits toward their degrees, a form of assistance especially helpful because the school system had ceased to provide that kind of support. The system, indeed, had been forced to cut back on programs for the development of its personnel generally. Retrenchment and general tightness (continuing into the foreseeable future) also made prospects of promotion and advancement dim. One of the three principals said, early on, before the research project began, during negotiations as to the form of the special doctoral program, that the main motivation for undertaking such study was personal growth. Despite the cost, and the difficulty of undertaking it over and above a full-time position, it was the one way open to him to continue to grow in his job.

The involvement of the three principals in the project extended to participation in conferences held to report on ethnographic work in education. In March 1980 the Graduate School of Education sponsored an "Ethnography in Education Research Forum" on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. One session was devoted to the views of educators and practitioners, and in it the principal who had been most a spokesman for the group took part, together with a teacher from another school with whom one of the researchers on the project had been working, as scheduled speakers. In May 1980 the School of Education at the University of Delaware invited Smith and Hymes to organize one session of a conference there on ethnographic work in education. The session was organized with an introduction by Hymes, reports by two of the researchers (May, Gilmore), and presentations by the three principals. It is fair to say that the presentations by the three principals stole the show. Each spoke to the meaning that involvement in dissertation work and ethnography had for them, and three distinct meanings and personalities were conveyed. Questions and discussion from the audience were directed almost entirely to the principals. (A paper by Smith, discussing the principals' involvement, and also presented at the Delaware conference, is included as an appendix.)

The next section of this report presents something of the views of each of the principals. It has been hoped to transcribe their Delaware remarks, unrehearsed and so effective, but the available tape proved inadequate. We hope that something of the voice of each still comes through. The inclusion of the section speaks to a concern that one of them especially voices, namely, to be recognized as contributors to the research enterprise themselves.

The relationships with the schools involved parents, children and teachers as well as principals. All parents whose children were part of the study were of course asked for their permission. Individual parents came to the fore in the course of the research in two inquiries, those of Ave Davis and Monroe Watkins. Each was concerned with a topic that would naturally bring parents into focus, Ms. Davis with the community context of Harriet Tubman School and Mr. Watkins with the teacher-parent relation at Shortridge. It does not seem accidental, however, that each researcher is also Black. That did not mean that neither experienced any anxiety or problem in establishing relationships with members of the community. An outsider of whatever background still has to be vouched for and has to learn local ways of doing things. Ms. Davis found that her childhood background in Augusta, Georgia, established her as someone whose family and friends were known to some of the key people in the Harriet Tubman area. Mr. Watkins found that many aspects of his life in the South provided bonds for him with many people in the Shortridge area. In conducting research Ms. Davis encountered an explicit distinction on the part of some people between "question-askers" and those who simply stay around to learn about things. Mr. Watkins found that it took time to overcome a natural impulse immediately to advise and help parents with their children's literacy problems, and to seek to moderate any difficulties in the teacher-parent relationship, given his years of background as a teacher, rather than to take the slower route of listening and identifying the problems and difficulties more surely.

It remains striking that the white researchers, even when involved in community activities, have less to say about specific parents. Partly this is due to different foci (Fiering, for example, has a number of observations in her field notes that do not appear here), but partly probably not.

It is striking as well that a picture of individual children comes through most vividly in Ms. Davis' report--though again the focus of the report has something to do with that, and in the report by Lussier from his work with some children of Shortridge School. Like Ms. Davis, Mr. Lussier worked outside of school in community settings, getting to know a few children as individuals there. (Again, something of this comes through in parts of Ms. Fiering's report, and there is more in her field notes, based on observations in homes, at church, and on bus trips.) Mr. Lussier, a young white male, was able to establish a relationship of hanging out a bit with some of the boys, and Ms. Fiering was able to translate experience as a teacher into a relationship as an additional adult helper.

Relationships with teachers varied from distant to close. Perhaps the most intimate relationship is reported by Woods-Elliott (IV.G.), with regard to a teacher with whom Fiering also worked. The very fact of the relationship reflects the cooperative relationship between the school in question, Commodore, and the Graduate School of Education. Ms. Woods-Elliott came to the Graduate School of Education, after a year at Harvard, seeking to develop ethnographic skills for study of the actual teaching of writing. David Smith devised a program for her, in the course of which the already good relationship with Commodore and the particular teacher provided a context for Woods-Elliott to learn, to observe, and to help.

At Shortridge, Gilmore, a former school teacher herself, became involved with supporting one teacher's special approach to language expertise, and with her academic advancement as well.

One teacher at Spaulding School was invited to take part in the Ethnography in Education Research Forum, and did so very effectively. Her presentation is transcribed in (III) below. It speaks trenchantly to a range of problems encountered by teachers, problems that go well beyond the scope of those addressed in this report. We think it is important to include the remarks because of the principle of starting with problems perceived by people in schools, even though it must be subsequent work that addresses many of these problems. Our focus on topics related to language skills and classroom instruction grew out of the initial interest expressed by the funding source, on the one hand, and the context of concern with reading in which the chosen schools principals and teachers were first approached.

The relationships with the schools were subject to unforeseen vicissitudes. Relationships with teachers at Shortridge were handicapped by turnover in personnel on both sides. During the course of the research, last minute adjustments to desegregation requirements resulted in transfers twice. (The teacher whose report is included in the next section has recently been transferred from Spaulding to Harriet Tubman.) On the side of the project, the researcher first chosen to work at Shortridge, a woman with previous experience there, became ill, inactive, and finally separated from the project in mid-year. Her role was taken up in mid-year by a capable person, who, however, had to take some time to become familiar with the situation and who could not stay beyond the end of that year. Fortunately, Lussier was able to focus much of his attention on children from Shortridge, and the general strength of relationships with that school somewhat compensated. The teachers at Shortridge, however, were not able to establish a firm relationship with an individual.

At Commodore and at Spaulding, on the other hand, and also at Harriet Tubman, stable and good relationships with individual teachers developed.

The most dramatic unforeseen vicissitude was the threat to close Spaulding, along with nine other schools, in the spring of 1980. For a time it seemed that the focus of May's research should turn to the threat and consequences of the closing. She was caught up in the school's response, carrying signs and walking in two protest marches organized by parents, and one organized by teachers. The principal asked her to take part in the School Board hearing on the closings, speaking to the school's association with the University of Pennsylvania, as well as its value to its community, which she did. Hymes, as Dean of the Graduate School of Education, also wrote on behalf of Spaulding. In the event Spaulding was among the eight of the ten schools kept open, and the relationship between the principal, the ethnographer, and the project greatly reinforced.

The relationships with the schools and their communities was of course a changing, significant one for each researcher. It seems appropriate to conclude this section with the reflections of one researcher on the relationship from her own standpoint. She (Fiering) speaks in important part to the advantages and disadvantages for ethnography of background as a teacher. Before concluding with these reflections, let the consequences of participation in the research for other investigators be mentioned. One faculty member, Anderson, intends to develop his interviews with one of the principals into a book. Davis has decided to return to graduate school for a doctorate, concentrating on ethnography, in order to deepen her work with the Harriet Tubman community as a dissertation; her principal goal is the furtherance of adult literacy work. Watkins will develop his study of teacher-parent relationships at Shortridge into a dissertation in the Reading/Language Arts program of the School. Gilmore has decided to develop her study into a dissertation (as against prior plans for a different focus). Lussier, a fresh B.A. at the time of his participation in the project, is in graduate work in sociology in California. May remains undecided as to whether or not to make her research the focus of a dissertation in the Department of Anthropology at the University. Woods-Elliott is engaged in a dissertation on the teaching of writing at two other Philadelphia schools. Fiering has taken a leave of absence from the Graduate School of Education and applied for admission to law schools. Smith is following up the project with related research on literacy in the coming year, research that will draw upon and contribute further to the cooperative relationships with local schools.

Reflections on Relationship with School and Community (Fiering).

The relationship between teacher and researcher is both a basis on which research proceeds and a subject for observation and study in itself. Because one of the goals of our study was to attempt to break down the traditional hierarchy that separates classroom teacher and university researcher and to demonstrate the benefits of a more genuine collaboration, it is important to focus on this teacher-researcher relationship as a major component of the project.

My own background as a former teacher was both a benefit and a hindrance in this situation although, I would argue, more of the former than the latter. As a teacher, I had "done my time" in front of a class. I knew the difficulties, frustrations, anger, as well as the rewards. In the day to day observations in any classroom the researcher is sure to see moments of embarrassment to the teacher--times when children rebel, when a lesson fails. And it was then that I could recall my own difficulties and hold them out to the teachers to demonstrate my empathy for the dilemma. In a way "telling tales" on myself was a way to gain trust.

Secondly, as a teacher-turned-researcher I already had some perspective on classrooms and teaching that allowed me to interpret events and incidents from the viewpoint of the teacher or to avoid passing judgement on incidents that could easily have been misjudged. However, this familiarity worked to my disadvantage as well. I was in danger of being blinded by my own preconceived notions, simply assuming I understood an event and thereby missing important perceptions. Only by constantly fighting this impulse toward over-familiarity, by making the setting strange and stepping outside my own firm "emic" perspective, could I begin to perceive certain of the underlying patterns in the classroom.

There is another danger open to researchers involved in educational research. Ethnography of a school is not the same as ethnography of a distant culture. The reasons for being in the school include a desire to bring about beneficial change in education. I often felt the need to step outside the researcher role and intervene to help a child or offer a suggestion to the teacher. I found it impossible to be only an observer, and am still not completely sure whether this tendency biased the research of added new depths of insight. Perhaps a bit of both.

My relationships with teachers evolved in different patterns, depending both on the personality of the teacher and the classroom situation. Often, a surface rapport was easy to achieve. This cordial relationship, however, had a certain very basic mistrust that teachers had toward researchers. I was still the observer, the representative of the university, and this placed me in the position of being a potential critic as well. For example, I worked with one teacher for the first year of the project in a very friendly relationship that included my offering to share my field notes, seeking feedback from her, asking for her perceptions and corrections to my observations, and constantly reasserting my own goodwill and desire to be helpful. At the end of that year, after the teacher read my report on the project, she said with some surprise and delight, "Well, there really is nothing negative in here." Despite my constant assurances that my goal was not to criticize the teacher, it was only when I handed her a document that demonstrated I had not been in the role of critic, that she was reassured. We began the second year in a more genuine collaboration, but unfortunately the teacher was transferred from the school and the relationship was broken. I found myself with a new teacher, who, while again cordial and helpful, could not afford me the same trust I had earned from the first.

My relationship with a second teacher proceeded in quite a different manner. Once I had demonstrated my willingness to participate in the classroom, my ability to get along with the children, and my understanding of her quite unorthodox methods, I felt a strong bond of both collaboration and friendship. This teacher read all my field notes, arguing with me on certain points, supplying additional information, reframing her own viewpoints and helping to shape mine. Perhaps the strongest proof of the bond of collaboration was that we were able to quite openly disagree over observations and their meaning.

The sharing of field notes with teachers was a point of some controversy within the project, some participants arguing that this would damage the objectivity of the research and hinder the notetaking. I found that knowing that teachers, in certain cases, would see my notes forced me to be highly descriptive and objective in my observations, helped to establish trust with the teacher, and opened an unequalled avenue of collaboration and feedback. I actually worked both ways, sometimes sharing notes and sometimes not (only reporting to teachers and checking points with them). By far I found the former method, while more difficult and time consuming, to be also more productive.

The project itself and the relations established with the school led to certain outcomes that were unforeseen at the start. For one, I taught a course in the Spring of 1980 entitled "Classroom Discourse and Interaction" in which students were required to do a semester of ethnographic research in a classroom. (The course is now a regular offering of the Educational Linguistics Program.) As part of this course, two of the students were permitted into the school as observers, one in a fourth grade and one in a sixth grade with a teacher who had participated in the project the preceding year. Claire Woods-Elliott, the observer in the sixth grade classroom, became a genuine participant observer in that class, helping the teacher to set up a writing program and establishing a relationship that was of benefit to both. This teacher, whose methods were often quite different from the rest of the school, later confided to me that she believed that Claire's and my presence and interest in her class and her techniques helped to legitimize her in the eyes of the school and "reassured" colleagues that her teaching style had value. Claire Woods-Elliott's work in that classroom became a supplement to my own, providing me with valuable information on writing--a kind of "free bonus" to the project. (See her contribution to part V on the teaching of writing.)

Relationships established in the community also had certain unforeseen effects. As a visitor to Sunday School classes, I soon found myself asked questions about how to handle reading problems, how to avoid embarrassing poor readers, etc. In some ways I was perceived as a very welcome liaison between church and school, a link that had not been established previously. While I was not free to pursue this link, the realization of the importance of such potential ties was an important offshoot of the project. The same held true of tutoring centers, the public library, and scout troops. Adults involved in these activities seemed to welcome a contact with the public schools and desired to support the efforts of the teachers.

The researcher, then, should be seen not only as an observer, but as a catalyst as well. This role is unavoidable and as such should be capitalized on as one of the strengths of ethnographic research. As relationships arise and effects manifest themselves, they become part of the ongoing research, rather than impediments to the smooth progression of the work. The ethnographer simply accepts what happens and incorporates it as valuable data. Thus, it is of equal importance to focus not only on the anticipated outcomes of the study, but to treat as findings the process of building relationships and accomplishing the research.

(III)

SCHOOL LEADERS AS PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

James Larkin, Compiler

Table of Contents

PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION

II. IMANI BROWN: Presentation at the First Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, University of Pennsylvania, March 1980 — 3

III. DOMENIC MATTEO: Presentation at the First Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, University of Pennsylvania, March 1980 — 8

IV. DOMENIC MATTEO: Presentation at University of Delaware Conference on Ethnography and Education, May 1980 — 16

V. JOHN GRELIS: Extracts from Doctoral Dissertation, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania — 19

VI. SYLVIA JONES: Presentation at University of Delaware Conference on Ethnography and Education, May 1980 — 36

APPENDIX A: Program, First Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, University of Pennsylvania — 39

APPENDIX B: Program, Ethnographic Research in the Schools: What's It All About? Fifth Annual College of Education Symposium, University of Delaware — 43

III. SCHOOL LEADERS AS PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Introduction

Throughout the course of the project the principals and teachers of the schools were involved in the planning and implementation of the research in a variety of ways. There were collective gatherings at various times, although to a considerable extent, the major relationships became personal ones between particular researchers from the project and particular principals and teachers. Some of our initial thoughts about involving school personnel actively as researchers were not realized, but in other respects our concern that the principals and teachers be recognized as collaborators in the research was successful beyond expectation. Two events were the major occasions.

The first event was the Ethnography in Education Research Forum, held March 16-18, 1980, at the University of Pennsylvania, and organized through the Center for Urban Ethnography at the Graduate School of Education. (Please see the attached copy of the program.) An essential part of the Forum was a session devoted to the views of practitioners. Two of the speakers were Ms. Imani Brown, a teacher, at one of the schools in the project, and Mr. Domenic Matteo, the forceful, occasionally embattled, principal of another. (Although the notion of 'educational leadership' has sometimes been restricted to administrative roles, our School's division of Educational Leadership includes teachers as well, and that conception of the teacher's role is reflected in the heading of this section.)

Ms. Brown addresses issues that go beyond the foci of this project, but we believe they are worth presenting here, being in keeping with the purpose of starting with problems perceived as such by school people. Future ethnography that starts at that point could well start with these.

The second event was a conference on ethnography and education at the University of Delaware, May 5-6, 1980. (Please see the attached copy of the program.) In keeping with the spirit of our project, we asked the principals of the three schools with which we had been most involved to speak, together with two of the researchers. All three, Domenic Matteo, Mr. John Grelis, and

Ms. Sylvia Jones, made presentations. The result was electric. The relevance of ethnography to schooling was not being advocated by academics with perhaps an axe to grind, but was being made manifest in the persons of three school people themselves. We did not ourselves have advance knowledge of what the three principals would say, and were deeply impressed with the way in which the personalities of each appeared within the common frame of reference.

The audio tape made at the Delaware conference proved to be exceedingly poor, but it was possible to make a transcript of the remarks by Mr. Matteo and Ms. Jones. The remarks of Mr. Grelis could not be discerned from the tape, but the dissertation which he (like the other principals) is writing, based on implementation of the Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading Plan within his school, contains passages that express his concerns. He recommended to us that we extract such passages and that is what had been done. We are grateful to all three principals, and Ms. Brown, for permission to include their remarks in this report, and especially to the three principals for additional help in the effort to decipher the Delaware tape.

The order of the remarks, then, is chronological, with a pair of statements by Mr. Matteo linking the two events.

(1) Ms. Imani Brown, Philadelphia Elementary School Teacher
(2) Mr. Domenic Matteo, Philadelphia Elementary School Principal
(3) Mr. Domenic Matteo
(4) Mr. John Grelis, Philadelphia Elementary School Principal
(5) Ms. Sylvia Jones, Philadelphia Elementary School Principal.

Ms. Imani Brown
Remarks presented at the First Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, March 16, 1980.

As David has said, his charge to us was very loose when he asked me to appear on the panel today. I am involved with the University of Penn in an ethnographic study that we are doing entitled, "Monitoring of Language Learning in Multicultural School and Community Settings" and I've been involved in it for about a year and a half, which probably explains the reason why I'm here. When David spoke to me about today, I wanted to share with you some of the ways I think ethnography can be helpful from a teacher's perspective.

To make sure that I said what I wanted to say, I also had to write it down because there were a lot of things that I wanted to say. So it's me talking but it's on the paper. I'm going to cover some areas I feel are important with the underlying theme that teachers are a vital source for helping researchers and for problem solving. Making ethnographic research responsive to individuals or groups that the research is being done to is one of the things I'm concerned about in this particular program. For example, doing research that will answer the questions that we, meaning the community in which they're working, want answers to -- not answers to questions that you've already established that we ought to be about answering. Don't assume that you know what it is that we want to know! A problem for [school] might be, how do we get parents into school to volunteer and take more of a responsibility for their child's work and behavior? Making the research practical and useful and usable is what I'm interested in seeing ethnographic research do. Also, making the research available to the people who you need to get the information from if they want it or if they need it and in a language that they can understand. My feeling is that if society is to benefit and not just a small, elitist group, then we must make it usable and available to those people.

Personally, the ethnographic approach to research has been a help to me in that it allows me to express, explain, and validate what I'm doing as a teacher. In so doing, I've seen a need to change a few things, modify some things in order to meet the students' needs and my own professional expectations. There are many areas of concern that I have that are professional and I think that you'll see the connection as I go along. I've chosen to comment on parents, "student evaluations" and its affect on teachers, "Teachers' Illpreparedness" and some positive final comments.

Parents. Since the audience today is probably composed mostly of educators and researchers in the field, maybe there is someone in the audience who will do a study to find out what kind of campaign you need to launch to sell to the parents the idea that educational institutions as they exist today, are in desparate need of parental involvement. If youngsters of today are to successfully complete their years in school (and by successfully I mean to be productive citizens) maybe we can sell to the kids like we sell them Hubba Bubba Bubble Gum and cigarettes and cars to their parents -- using a third party to campaign and advertising to get our parents involved. My belief and my experience is that most parents are interested and concerned about their children, but the institution as it exists today is not inviting and, to say the least, downright threatening at its worst. The day no longer exists, in my mind, when teachers and administrators can educate children without parental involvement, if it ever did. The problems are too deep and too widespread to make meaningful and lasting change without parents. Teachers today have to live with doing the best you can while you have the students, knowing full well that for most of them, without some kind of additional supportive help, these students will not make it through the system successfully. At worst, we give up and teach to only those who wish to learn and probably would have gotten it anyway. There have been times when I have said to our school community coordinator, our school secretary, our principal, counselor, or even another teacher, "Don't tell me any more, I don't want to know any more about that child's life." I really don't know how they handle what they bring to school each day, but I do understand why school is not a priority if survival is what's first on that child's mind.

Student evaluations and the problems teachers see with them and how they can be more useful to us. For the first time in fourteen years, I've written up requests for student evaluations or what we might call "psychologicals." Up to this point, the reason for not having written any was not because I didn't see a need, but because the staff did not exist in this district. Seeing the need, I hope that the reason why it does exist now and more teachers are willing to try and find help for those students. We are more likely now to try and get these educational evaluations for students, with the hope that they will be processed in a reasonable time, which has not been the norm. It is not unusual to find students who are still waiting for placement and is most frustrating for students and teachers, after a year or two years.

Bureaucratic paperwork is the way I look at that and the approach to things have to continue the same way they have been going. And those are the questions that we're raising. Need things continue to go in the direction they are going especially when we see that they're not working? There are classrooms with openings where these students could be. Why is it that we have to wait? Why isn't maybe one possibility that principals and the evaluating team make the placements in the schools where they know the openings are instead of having to wait for it to go down to central administration and then come back. Also, the evaluations, when given back to teachers, to make them responsive and able for us to read and able to understand them.

Dr. Scanlon (Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) touched also on our illpreparedness and the changing college (?) of classes and preparation for teachers. I felt particularly illprepared to deal with some of the problems that are in the school system today and I'd like to talk about three very briefly. I feel ill prepared, and I think most teachers do, to deal with alchohol and drugs on an elementary school level. We are not prepared, as a rule, to deal with this. There are one or two courses that might be offered in our school system, and I'm sure there are, because I've seen the list, but they are aimed mostly at high school teachers and physical ed and health teachers particularly. It's happening on the elementary level and we need help. Illprepared for mainstreaming. Few of us are prepared academically, which means through training or college courses, to deal with physically handicapped students and do a good job. We are probably better able to handle youngsters who are mentally handicapped, if not too severe, because we have some experience with them, as some are still waiting in our rooms.

Another illpreparedness issue -- desegregation and how it affects teachers and teacher morale, in addition to the way it affects our students. I hesitate to put this under illpreparedness, but when I thought about it, I realized that teachers are illprepared to deal with this. Teachers in the district were sent to workshops by the school district. In the workshops that they gave, which involved a speaker, a discussion group, and a film, all of this in two or three hours, makes us able, for those of us who felt that we were not, to deal with desegregation, then I would ask them to rethink the policy and realize that that might be a beginning, but not an end in itself. As important as that is, it should also be taken into consideration the upheaval caused by the school district in transferring teachers en masse solely on data based on race of the teacher. I think every teacher in the system, whether they were moved or not, felt empathy for those who were shifted from one place to a second, and sometimes even to a third school. Would you believe that the school district has been under this court order since the early 50's? What good are all these think tank studies, researches, if they can't help to solve important problems more reasonably and with the people in mind that they are affecting? Do we learn anything from industry, where we know that these businesses would not survive without a better handling of these kinds of problems and we know they exist? Talk about slow learners, thirty years is a long time!

A positive note, a personal positive note. We had an affective education component of the school district and I'd like to give a personal hurrah for this component because they seem to have realized some years ago that teachers were having to deal with affective or feelings inside of youngsters whether they realized it or not, and whether they wanted to or not. They established strategies and lesson plans to constructively deal with these problems. They are concerned with teachers, teachers' feelings, and the reality of their problems. They continue to change as a program and modify to fit the needs of the teachers and their students. They have even managed to continue to get funding doing these very subversive things.

Yesterday, we sat, as a group, on our feelings, for good or for ill. Today's kids are more into expressing themselves, and they do. If you are a parent, and you know that it is happening at home, how many times have you said, "I would never have said that to my mother or I would never have said that to my father." Well, if you can multiply this times the maximum that we're allowed in the classroom, close to 33, you have some idea of what we're trying to deal with there. Children are not sitting on it, they are expressing themselves and it is different and sometimes difficult for teachers. Children are changing and they're changing in ways in which they learn, and their learning is feeding this particular change. The institution of education will need to change and modify to meet the needs of these children if it is to continue successfully.

A final note. How about a campaign waged to sell the idea that teachers are important people to the society, worth working with, and asking the questions. Because we think we have some of the answers.

Mr. Domenic Matteo
Remarks presented at the Ethnography in Education Research Forum,
Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, March 16, 1980.

Thank you, Dave. I think I'm better known as a look-alike for Lou Asner than anything else. I was happy to see Imani here today because she is the Bo Derek of District 1, as you can see, and I just wanted to say to Imani that I recognize all those problems that she alluded to, and I used to have that kind of hair before I became a principal. When you first came in, Dave mentioned that it was nice that at a meeting like this, you couldn't tell the practitioners apart from the academician or researcher and I just wanted to give him a little tip as to how you can find out in the future, something an ethnographer might do in the future to observe the differences. The ethnographer or the researcher would come in and immediately pick up the program and want to know who's on the program, what kind of talks is he going to be able to hear. The practitioner comes in and he wants to know where the men's room is, or where is the ladies' room! Where are the stairs and how can I make a quick exit -- that sort of thing.

So that there's no mistake, I am, I guess, a hybrid. I have a foot in both camps. As a consequence of some things that have happened to me personally a long time ago, when I was a teacher, I had the good experience of being involved in a program known as Man: A Course of Study. I don't know if any of you have been involved in that at all, but I was a fifth grade teacher at one time and Man: A Course of Study was an innovative project that had been developed by many prestigious people, not the least of whom was Jerome Brunner. The core of that study was really an in-depth ethnographic presentation of the life of the Netsilik Eskimos. It was our purpose with the students to have them appreciate the value system of these Netsilik to such a degree, to such an extent, that we interpret their behaviors in the light of their value system, their belief system. After dealing with this course for two or three years, I got to know pretty much about the belief system and the value system and the things that motivated the Netsilik.

Later, when I became a principal of a school in Philadelphia and I was suddenly made principal in a neighborhood that was very alien to my former lifestyle, very different from my lifestyle, those of you who may be from this area might know South Philadelphia and its particular ethnocentricities. West Philadelphia is completely different. So, here I am principal. I was born and raised in South Philadelphia and now suddenly I'm principal of a school with 1200-1400 children. At that time, in a neighborhood that was completely different from the one I grew up in, and a parents group that exhibited a different kind of feeling for the schools than the ones I had been accustomed to. And I thought at that time, wouldn't ethnography be a good thing for me to get into and really do some kind of deep observations in my own particular school and neighborhood? From that moment until now, that's been a primary concern of mine, to get to know more, as much as I could, about the people in my school community, their lifestyle, their value system -- the things the children have to interact with when they're at home, in their neighborhood, the things they bring to school that in many ways are some factors in their learning or behaving in school.

Coupled with that, we all along had this feeling, for want of a better term, "lack of success" in our effort. Not just at my school, but it's been a kind of general problem in Philadelphia, I guess in most urban centers, where we were really feeling badly about not being able to have more of our children demonstrate success, particularly on the standardized tests. And this concern brought us to the doorstep of the University of Pennsylvania, asking (when I say us, I am referring to a large number of administrators from this vicinity, 21 at the beginning and 17 presently, who have formed a kind of colleaguial relationship with the University) to examine what research can do to help point the way for us as practitioners. We've been in this kind of a relationship now for about five years and it's keeping us all abreast of things that are happening, it's giving us an opportunity to be witness to things that have surfaced in the field of research, that we might be able to employ in our schools. It's also done something else, it's created a kind of a friendship, a kind of bond between the people at the University and the people out in the field so that we see each other as members of the same team. And that's good. We've gotten out of that perspective of an "us" and "them" kind of a framework, and where we see our tasks as different and we're working together as colleagues. We recognize that we have mutual interests, a common problem and we're pooling our resources to try to cope with that.

I thought that what I would do would be to give you three main ideas to take away with you. One would be the context in which I have to perform my function as a principal. Secondly, I thought I would allude to some of the issues that confront me, some of our previous speakers have already alluded to several, but I have three pages full; and some ways that ethnography may be able to be useful for a principal and helpful to me. And if there is still time, some of the projects we have gotten involved in as a consequence of this interest in ethnography.

First of all, for those of you who may not know what an urban school is like, mine can be considered a typical one. It's large, it's overcrowded, my span of supervision includes 70 staff members, I have 1200 students, two different buildings, and I have an assistant -- one assistant. By and large, we take care of the children's needs from breakfast to lunch, medical services, dental services, and even some after-school kinds of services like baby sitting until parents get home from work. Most of the children come from single-family dwellings, largely female-led households. The neighborhood itself is roughly an eight-block square in the western part of the city. The houses are quite comfortable, a mix of semi-detached and row-type homes, but the neighborhood has changed in the past ten years dramatically from an all-white section ten years ago to an all-black section now. And it's changed along other lines as well. There were some very large church congregations is the neighborhood before which have now changed over. We had a large synagogue that has now become a Baptist church. We bought the school from the synagogue, so that's our annex. So there have been changes along several lines, I guess you could say several ethnographic lines. The neighborhood previously had many older people with their children beyond school age. Now, with the change, we have a lot of young families moving into the neighborhood with a lot of children. Where before parents were private school oriented or parochial school oriented, now, most of the families are public school oriented and the public school that was there before had no more than 500 children soon swelled to 1600 children during my early years there as a principal. I've been principal there for eleven years now.

Inside the school, we have a very comfortable place, it's very new, seven years old, my staff has been with me all those years. I've had very little turnover other than by natural causes and we are now building what I call a tradition. Some of the speakers before alluded to a culture of the school, I'd like to think we're building a tradition in our school. With that sudden change from an all white neighborhood to a black neighborhood, the parent groups, the people who had been the leadership in the community, they've gone and now we have an emerging leadership now and a new Home and School Association, new contacts with parents and with our leadership group. We are now seeing some of the younger brothers and sisters of the older ones, and that's what I mean by tradition. It's not that we have new families, we now have the second generation, so to speak, of children coming through. So we've had some initial contact with the parents four or five years ago, now we're seeing the younger siblings come in. And all of that is just in the way of a little context of our particular work site.

I could stay here and give you a whole litany of the various perceptions of a principal, you know they range from positive or negative and even perceptions of myself. If you were to ask two different people in our school community about Mr. Mateo you might get somebody who might speak glowingly, somebody else might have a very different perception of me entirely. But one general theme runs through all of these perceptions, that the principal is the ultimate accountable person in that school and the principal should be in control and anything that happens, the principal is the one who either gets the credit or gets the blame. That seems to be a theme that no matter whether you're a parent, a school administrator from central office, somebody from research (research was just conducted recently by the Federal Reserve Bank) and they make a big point about saying the principal is a key person in that school. The principal is the key to the instructional program. I'm not saying that any of these things in the way of being defensive, I just want you to have an appreciation of the particular milieu and the context in which I operate.

My own perception about myself is that I am a very powerful person -- very powerful in my school and very powerful in my community. And I want to keep it that way. And I abhor criticism. And I'm going to do everything that I can to fight it. And if my scores are coming under criticism, I'm going to look to every possible advantage, whether it's research, whether it's in another school, whether it's a colleague of mine who has some information for me -- but I'm going to try everything and anything to bring those scores up to where I think they should be. Not that I'm looking at scores only, we make a big thing about the effect of domain too that Imani alluded to and I think that the only way I could say anything about that is to invite you to our school to enjoy some of its warmth and some of its environment. Contrary to what might be a general feeling about the principal, I know today a lot of people are beginning to feel the pressures, and they're beginning to make excuses and say I can't do this, I have no power, I have no control. I'm taking a different slant. I'm going to be an opportunist. I am going to look for ways I can get power. I am going to broaden my power base and I am going to try to exercise as much control over every element of my operation, whether it's the union contract, whether it's resources that I have to manage, even parent groups that I have to deal with. I may be Machiavellian, but that is my particular belief.

I thought rather than going through all these issues that were alluded to, there certainly are challenges to my authority and there are various perceptions about power, control and some disillusionment about pupil achievement, all of those things that were mentioned. I can go down a whole list of things that impinge and impact on my operation. It is complex. And when I make a judgment, I have to take into consideration all of these factors, all of these aspects. Research may be unquestionable about a certain direction in which we have to move, but research also has to be tempered in light of the context in which we have to operate. As in Man: A Course of Study, there is no question that the rifle is more technologically efficient than a harpoon, but we have to look at the consequences when we introduce something new into an environment.

Well, I could go on forever and I become very boring, but I have two pages of some of my beliefs if you'd like to hear them. I think by and large, educators have known for a long time how their children are performing. In fact, we had one big, gigantic department in the city of Philadelphia known as Testing and Research and they had a computer and they could pump out any data they wanted on a child on a particular census tract. In my school, they could give me any kind of information I wanted, any hard data. The one thing that I found missing that we don't get out of all this quantification is the qualification. Nobody tells us why. We know how, but I think we're looking to ethnography to give us some tips about why these particular children are scoring this particular way, or why we have these kinds of problems with certain kinds of lifestyles. One of my beliefs is that we have to come to ethnography for help. I need help. As a practitioner, I can't do it alone and I'm looking to the University of Penn and to research to help me find some of the answers to these problems.

One of my beliefs is that the principal must demonstrate a knowledge of, an interest in, and a commitment to curriculum. I think it's my purpose in relationship to my teachers to let them know that I am the first teacher in that school. I am the head teacher in that school. And I just can't say that, I have to demonstrate it. That means I have to be knowledgeable about curriculum, I have to willing go in there and demonstrate, and I have to be able to take over the class from time to time if need be. But they have to respect me for knowing the craft, for knowing how to teach children. That's my belief.

The principal must be the acknowledged instructional leader of the school. He sets the tone and also he sets the task that must be accomplished. The principal must be involved in active research and experimentation. I would like to see more experimentation done right at the field level, not in some laboratory setting. One of the criticisms that you'll always hear from practitioners is that's fine, but look, you've controlled all the circumstances, you're not being realistic. Let's do it out there where you're working with thirty-three children and you have all the other competing factors dealing with the research. Let's not isolate and do it at the University or do it off-site somewhere. We must do it at the school level.

I am basically eclectic and I'll try anything short of something that would be harmful to my staff or my students. My own belief is that the key to all of this is communication -- honest, open communication. We have to keep all of our doors open. That means the university as well as the school and this conference is an example of a willingness to communicate. I also believe that affect is vital for a positive effect. I think that feelings are important and that you have to deal with those in all of our interactions. I feel that creating a family atmosphere is important in the school. I think that's something that has to be evident -- where people are treating each other in a courteous way, a friendly way, and not where you have cliques and rivalry and pettiness, you have a genuine concern for one another, where people will pitch in. If you know one of your colleagues may be a little late you open your door and help cover that class. You won't stick on ceremony or you won't stick on technicalities, you'll extend yourself. The principal must be enterprising and resourceful and be willing to listen and to give a lot. And I think the important thing is to look for the motives behind a particular action.

When I talked before about coming from South Philly to West Philly and when I was admonishing one of the children from West Philly, the boy put a grin on his face and he smiled. Coming from South Philly, I misinterpreted that as arrogance and that's something I later learned as just a kind of a feeling of uncomfortableness on the part of the child. That's the kind of thing we have to try to understand and I think ethnography helps us see some of those things -- the way people react to situations depending on their particular lifestyle.

My biggest challenge is to provide everyone with an acceptable vehicle to express their views on any particular issue on any topic. When it's a parent who comes in to see me, I have to establish ahead of time, a way that that parent can find an approach to me other than having to do it through some demonstration or some militant action. There has to be some process set up ahead of time by which she can address her concerns to me -- not only parents, it should be the same with teachers. I think the school is where it's at and the school level is the real focal point of action.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Domenic Matteo
Remarks transcribed from the University of Delaware Conference
on Ethnography and Education, May 5, 1980.

I did want to make some opening comments. There are several teachers joining us today from the University of Penn and there is one other thing that has joined us today and that is the "c" in my last name. You don't have to bother correcting the program. We are saying some very delicate things in our discussions today and this should come out in an anonymous form. I do appreciate the Dean alluding to me as "one of the accidents" he ran into about six years ago. I think it's time we gave you some idea how we developed this collaborative relationship between administrators from the western school districts of Philadelphia and the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania.

As has been mentioned already there are an awful lot of issues to confront. It is because of several of these issues that we thought about enrolling at the University of Pennsylvania in educational studies. To have the benefit of their research and to try and find answers to some of the questions that involved just the idea of surviving as a principal. Six or seven years ago our situation was very bleak in Philadelphia. Our students were doing well below the national norms on standardized tests. The parents were very upset. Whole communities were so militant against the school that it became a common thing for them to ask for the removal of a particular principal. And with all of this happening it didn't take much to see that we had to do something. In my particular school 62 percent of the students scored below the percentile.

So for all intents and purposes, more than half of my children were "illiterate" and I have some excuses for that, but be that as it may, it was not a happy picture and we wanted to change that right away. So a group of us, approximately 21 principals and other administrators enrolled in courses at the University that were especially designed to help us become familiar with the whole scope of research in curricula areas and research techniques. And we did that for about one year and a half. By that time, we were becoming familiar with really neat things in research and one of those things was Mort Botel's proposal known as the Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading Plan (PCRP). That was the catalyst that brought together the people at the school level that needed help and the people at the University who were looking for some kind of opportunity to field test the program.

And through this contact with Dr. Botel I indicated to him that I would be happy to bring this program into our school. And it was through this relationship that we formed, at that time, what was called the PAIR program which was an acronym for Parents Aid in Reading. We wanted to make an impact on parents assisting in reading at home. What happened was that Dr. Botel conducted his graduate studies course program at my school two evenings a week. The students had the advantage of meeting with elementary students and parents and they would demonstrate some reading activity with the student. Then we gave the parents material to take home during the week to practice that particular skill or activity. We did that for a whole year. At the end we had a party and graduation exercises for the children. I can't tell you what it meant to me as a principal. And that was the beginning of what flowered into a more intense relationship between my school, at least, and the University.

From that program came the idea of implementing this in other schools. Obviously, our resources were limited. So we got together with the 21 other administrators and principals to say that we were going to go through an orientation program at my school. So the following year we ran the PAIR program, but now not only did we have the students and faculty from the University, but we incorporated the 21 administrators as well. And that was year one, in what was expected to be a two-year commitment on the part of the principals to the University, as well as to implement Dr. Botel's program in the school. And that's what we are involved in presently which is actually the third year of that cycle. We, each of us, is responsible to report the change that implementing the program has brought about in his/her own school. And hopefully, we will be able to document all of that in our dissertations. It is because of this that we developed an open, productive and accommodating relationship.

What I particularly appreciated was the fact that the Graduate School of Education and Dean Hymes were so receptive that they formed an advisory committee that meets periodically to develop plans to keep the program dynamic. And it's that kind of an attitude that came from the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to this relationship, the University had a very negative impression on many of the school people of Philadelphia. Our impression of the University was, that although it is situated in the city limits, it always managed to offer programs and cater to people in the suburban school districts. It did not really involve itself in the issues confronting urban education until now. This program was a 180 degree turn in that situation. Now, here we are in meetings working together -- principals and administrators suggesting programs that we would like to see. The University has been very accommodating, and we have been pretty much given our own heads. And to me this has been the greatest thing about this cooperative enterprise -- we were not seen as people that they were going to foist something upon, but people to work with and develop team relationship. I really appreciate that. I think the time is opportune that students of education really get into the field and not consider us as clinics or laboratories with everything taking place away from the actual site of where all the action is. And it is really gratifying for me, and I am sure the parents are thrilled at the way that we turned our situation around. I alluded to the fact that 61 percent of our students were below the 50th percentile and now, through the blood, sweat, and tears of our programs, 60 percent of the children are above the 50 percentile. Thank you very much.

Mr. John Grelis
Relevant extracts from the first draft of Mr. Grelis' doctoral dissertation at the Graduate School of Education of the University of Pennsylvania.

In the late 1960's the schoolwide reading performance levels of the children at Vare were alarmingly low. The term "non-reader" was frequently used by faculty members to describe a child who had no "sounding out" skills rather than one who was not highly motivated to read independently. My approach to the problem was that a concerted effort needed to be made to develop decoding skills, and I assumed that the remaining skills would fall into place without much difficulty. At this point in my career, I was convinced that a highly sequenced specific skills approach was the most effective way to teach reading.

During the same school year, I was completing required courses for elementary principal certification and preparing myself to take the Philadelphia School District examination for the elementary school principalship. The content of this examination has traditionally been focused on current local educational problems and issues. My earliest efforts to identify these current issues through discussions with principals and other educational leaders produced the conclusion that pupil achievement in basic skills, particularly in the area of reading, was perceived by most prominent local educators as the most critical problem facing public education in Philadelphia at that time. My identification of the importance of this issue was confirmed in May, 1970 when I took the written portion of the principal's examination. The first of the two essay questions asked candidates to discuss the role of the elementary school principal in improving pupil achievement levels in reading. I regarded this examination as a critical event in both my career and in the implementation of policy in the SDP. The clear message coming from central administration throughout the School System was that pupil achievement in reading must be improved and that individuals were going to be selected for the principalship on the basis of their potential ability to produce this improvement. Consequently, my response to this examination question reflected the prevailing thinking that reading was most effectively taught by using a specific skills approach and that staff development for teachers should emphasize this approach.

A second critical event which affected both my career and the implementation of policy to improve the literacy skills of public school children in Philadelphia also occurred in May, 1970. At this time, the Board of Education allocated five and a half million dollars for a five-year reading improvement program. With only the month of July to prepare and submit a reading proposal for the district, the erstwhile Superintendent of District Three, Charles A. Highsmith, invited me to serve on the proposal committee. My assignment was to develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the reading plan which would be formulated. My most significant and lasting contribution was to recommend that the California Achievement Test (CAT) be adopted as the most appropriate nationally standardized test to use for evaluating the progress of children toward the goals of the District Three reading plan. During the 1970-1971 School Year, both the ITBS and the CAT were used to test District Three pupils. However, the entire School System eventually abandoned the ITBS in favor of the CAT because the CAT was easier to administer, took less time to administer, was more relevant to local curriculum measurement needs, and covered the scope of grade one through grade twelve.

My participation in the development of the reading plan led the District Three Superintendent to request central administration that I be assigned from the eligibility list for the elementary school principalship to the principalship of the Francis Scott Key School in District Three because he felt I had "...a keen understanding of the proposed reading program thrust." I was subsequently appointed to the principalship of the Key School in October, 1970, and served in that capacity until June, 1975.

From July, 1970, through the 1974-1975 School Year, the School District offered numerous opportunities for in-service training of school administrators. Prudent administrators took advantage of these opportunities to sharpen their leadership skills in improving pupil achievement. Ever since my assignment as principal of the Key School in 1970, my main professional focus has been to plan and implement ways of improving pupil achievement levels in reading and mathematics. The efforts of the SDP to promote pupil achievement gains through increased funding levels for reading produced modest system-wide gains each year from 1970 through 1975. Unfortunately, like most urban school systems, Philadelphia began experiencing severe budgetary difficulties and the funding to support continued in-service training for principals was almost entirely eliminated from the School System budget in 1976. However, the primary stated system-wide goal remained the... "development of reading, writing, and computational skills in all students."

The increasing scarcity of in-service opportunities caused principals and other school administrators to turn to the local Universities for support in helping them to develop the necessary instructional leadership skills to promote pupil achievement. In 1974, a group of school administrators from Philadelphia's School District One consulted with faculty members from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education to determine if the University could offer a program of studies that was relevant to the immediate professional needs of the administrators. The University of Pennsylvania was an obvious choice because of its prestigious reputation and convenient location within the geographic boundaries of District One. Later in the year, plans were mutually developed by District One administrators and faculty members from the University's Graduate School of Education (GSE) which resulted in a flexible course offering entitled "Field Work in Education." This course was limited to District One personnel and was offered for four semesters. Having been assigned to District One in September, 1975, as a result of a promotional transfer to the principalship of the Commodore Elementary School, I became interested in the Field Work in Education Program and I subsequently enrolled in the course for one semester.

The planning sessions for the Field Work in Education course revealed that the major concern of District One administrators was the improvement of pupil performance in basic skills. The responsiveness of the GSE faculty prompted District One principals to suggest that a doctoral program be structured around their unique professional needs. This recommendation remained dormant until the 1976-1977 School Year when the topic emerged in a discussion between Domenic Matteo, Principal of the Shortridge School in District One, and Dr. Morton Botel, a faculty member of the GSE. Botel had recently developed "The Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading/Communication Arts Plan" (PCRP) which had been accepted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as the statewide "Right to Read" plan. Botel was interested in studying the impact of the PCRP on pupil achievement in reading and the communication arts at the Shortridge School. The confluence of their ideas led to the formulation of a plan to develop a special doctoral course of study designed by Dr. Botel which was eventually approved by the GSE faculty. This doctoral program was designed to prepare District One administrators and other educational leaders for the Ed.D. degree at the GSE. The general mission of the course of study was to develop the competence of participants in designing, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive reading/communication arts program. Participants were expected to develop doctoral dissertations based on the implementation of such a program in their schools. The participants agreed to earn the Ed.D. degree by completing at least twelve course units and a dissertation over a three year period starting in Fall, 1977. In addition, participants agreed to take the major examination in the Administration of Reading/Communication Arts Programs.

Approval and support for the study and implementation of the PCRP in Philadelphia Public Schools were obtained from Dr. I. Ezra Staples, Deputy Superintendent for Instructional Services; Dr. Michael H. Kean, Executive Director of Research and Evaluation; and Dr. William Ross, Jr., District One Superintendent.

University support was most encouraging. Several faculty members including Dr. Dell H. Hymes, Dean of the Graduate School of Education, volunteered to serve on the doctoral committees of the participants and gave this program a high priority consideration. The University faculty demonstrated a willingness to establish a "collegial" relationship with the twenty-three District One administrators who matriculated into the program. The faculty was particularly concerned with strengthening the position of the GSE in the community, University, and region by establishing a partnership between District One educators and the GSE committed to the improvement of the quality of public education in District One. In an effort to grow with the administrators in the implementation of this project, GSE faculty who agreed to serve on the doctoral committees also agreed to visit the respective schools of the participants. This level of involvement was viewed as important by District One administrators since they would continue serving in their full time roles as school administrators without taking the usual leave of absence from professional responsibilities to conduct doctoral research. The participants also felt that the GSE faculty would be able to develop a more relevant program of course work if they were able to gain insight into the key factors affecting principals, particularly in their roles as change agents and instructional leaders directly involved in the process of implementing the PCRP in their respective schools.

My personal view of the project when plans were finalized in the summer of 1977 was that it would fill a void in my continued professional development created by the reduction of in-service education funds by the SDP. I was also concerned about finding effective ways to improve the performance of Commodore students on standardized reading tests since these scores were published on a school-by-school basis by the two major local newspapers. Efforts to encourage the specific skills approach recommended by the SDP had resulted in modest gains throughout the early 1970's. However, reading test scores from Commodore School and several other schools in District One appeared to have reached a plateau since the 1974-1975 School Year. With approximately 45 percent of Commodore students scoring above national norms on the Total Reading section of the CAT, our school was performing well in relation to other schools in District One. However, our failure to continue our earlier pattern of consistent gains was disturbing to the teachers and to me.

I was, therefore, interested in taking a different approach to improving the literacy levels of Commodore students. The potential that I recognized in the PCRP for improving pupil literacy was a critical factor in my decision to make a commitment to promote the implementation of the PCRP. At this point, however, I was determined to approach the implementation effort cautiously since I did not wish to jeopardize our relative degree of sucess.

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Implications of the Literature Concerning the Rationale and Need for This Study

There is substantial agreement in the literature concerning the limitations of traditional experimental research designs in studying many educational problems of current interest. There is also a recognition of the need for researchers to adopt more integrative ways of knowing. In order to accommodate the needs of this present study, a mode of inquiry was required that would provide a description of a change process rather than outcomes of statistical generalizations about probable results. In order to assess the effectiveness of my efforts to implement the PCRP, it was apparent that techniques would be required that would provide the kind of holistic perspective needed to integrate the various dimensions of the change process which would remain disparate in a traditional research model. From my analysis of the literature, I concluded that a field study approach using direct observation as the primary research method would be flexible enough to permit me to utilize what was already known about reading, the school, and the change process. At the same time, this approach would enable me to utilize a variety of data collection and analytical procedures which would be appropriate in describing the extent to which the PCRP was implemented at the Commodore School. The sustained interaction among students, school staff members, and community people could be directly observed and recorded. The specific techniques employed would include structured and unstructured observations, formal and informal interviews, and other data gathering measures such as questionnaires, school records, psychometric data, and analysis of documents.

This type of study was not limited but open to new descriptions of the change process observed in the classroom. Elements of reading instruction were not isolated for study and analysis but were observed in the natural classroom setting so that their interdependence could be noted and recorded. Pupils and teachers were observed in a real life school situation without artificialities imposed by experimental research designs. Integrated research techniques were employed to provide a detailed description of the extent to which the PCRP was implemented.

It was believed that this type of study could provide significant insights into the change process for educational practitioners which have not emerged from other models of educational research and thereby contribute to our knowledge concerning the conditions influencing the implementation of innovations in a school setting.

A final important feature of this study that contributed to its significance was the effort to document a process which attempted to link research and practice. This study was designed to provide a description of a model of university and school district cooperation which promoted an integration of research and professional practice. This model was based on the notion that both the goals of and the skills necessary for educational research and educational practice can be seen as identical at the conceptual level and therefore, practitioners can engage in the routine course of their work without the necessity of serious outside intrusion.

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From my previous experiences with educational change efforts at Commodore, I recognized that a significant facet of my instructional leadership style involved an attempt to function as an applied empiricist in order to collect sound data to support my planning strategies, interventions, and follow-up efforts with the instructional staff. I anticipated that the implementation could be facilitated by making an effort to continue to be perceived as an applied empiricist rather than as a formal researcher. I felt that this role would not only be more conducive to collecting the data for formative evaluation but also more conducive to maintaining open lines of communication with the instructional staff necessary for the process of constructively reshaping our reading/communication arts program.

Establishing a Rapport with the School Staff

From having served as principal of Commodore School since September, 1975, I had managed to develop a favorable working relationship with the school staff. I assumed that this relationship could be most helpful in facilitating the implementation of the PCRP and in conducting this study. However, I became very concerned about the manner in which my participation in the special doctoral program for District One administrators would be perceived by the school staff. As I considered the implications of my study, I began to realize that there were important issues of trust, anonymity, confidentiality, and conflict of interest which needed to be addressed. I found that similar concerns were also shared with the other District One administrators who participated in this project. There was considerable discussion among the administrators about these problems throughout September and October, 1977. Many of us met several times before class for our two courses to consider these problems. Eventually, one of our courses, Education 920, became an important forum for us to plan approaches to resolve these problems. Education 920 was a "Seminar in School Leadership and Field Educational Research" conducted by Dr. Morton Botel and Dr. James M. Larkin for the District One administrators who were enrolled in the special doctoral program. The course was designed to help each participant to define his/her particular research problem for a dissertation proposal. The seminar was a two-semester course which extended throughout the 1977-1978 School Year.

From the outset of the seminar, neither Botel nor Larkin claimed to have any pat solutions to offer. They pointed out that the recommended time line for the project did not require us to initiate efforts to implement the PCRP until the 1978-1979 School Year. They suggested that it would be advantageous for us to observe the recommended development of the project which called for us to use the 1977-1978 School Year to become thoroughly familiar with the PCRP and to learn how to utilize it as framework for appropriate curriculum development in our respective schools. They felt that they could be of most help at that particular stage by assisting us to identify the real issues that would emerge as we each attempted to clarify our research problem.

At that time I did not feel that their recommendations directly addressed the problems I had perceived for conducting a study in my school. Throughout most of the first semester I remained apprehensive about the possibility that my involvement in a research project would have a negative impact on the morale of the school staff. Several members of the Commodore staff were already uneasy about attempts by the SDP to introduce a system of accountability, and I was concerned that the staff might perceive this study as a subtle approach to introduce such a system at Commodore School. I was also concerned that my effort to earn a doctorate by involving the school staff in a research project might be regarded as an unfair exploitation of the staff to promote my own career. Consequently, I decided that unless I could resolve these problems, I would terminate my participation as a doctoral student at the conclusion of the second semester. However, I felt obligated to honor my commitment to promote the implementation of the PCRP in Commodore School to the extent that I might find that it addressed our curricular needs. Furthermore, I decided that it would be inappropriate for me to discuss my study with the school staff until I determined that it would be reasonably practical for me to conduct it without negative consequences on staff morale.

It was not until the break between the fall and spring semesters that I came to appreciate the value of the gradual process recommended by Botel and Larkin for addressing the ethical and practical issues of the study. During this three week period, I was actively involved in developing a tentative outline for my dissertation proposal. While I was engaged in this process, I gained a clearer understanding of the focus of my research problem. Through my participation in the seminar, I found that I was well prepared to use the process of composing the proposal outline as an opportunity to resolve the major issues which had emerged. The most important realization which emerged from this process was that the study I had envisioned was essentially an evaluation of my effectiveness in an instructional leadership capacity and that the kind of data I would be seeking would not represent a threat to the staff.

By the end of the first week in January, 1978, I felt that I could confidently articulate the nature of this study to the school staff in a manner that would minimize their apprehensions and encourage their cooperation. I would have preferred to discuss the proposed study at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting with the entire instructional staff present because I felt that it would be desirable to have the entire staff hear the same message at the same time and have an opportunity to raise questions while the information was still fresh in everyone's mind. However, I decided that it would be more advisable to meet first with the union building committee because of the following provisions of the contract with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (P.F.T.):

> 5a (ii). The principal of a school who may be accompanied by one vice principal of his choice shall meet at least once a month with the Federation Building Committee at its request to discuss school operations and questions relating to the implementation of this Agreement. The Federation Building Committee shall consist of not more than five teachers from that school and may include, in addition, not more than one member from that school of each of the other bargaining units represented by the Federation.
>
> 5b (i). Proposed changes in existing policies and procedures and new policies and procedures for that school shall be subjects for discussion at such meetings. Such policies adopted or maintained by any principal shall not be inconsistent with the terms of this Agreement. (p. 3)

My decision to conduct the first discussion of the proposed study with the building committee was based on my experience in working as a principal in a labor contract relationship with teachers for the past seven years. During this time I found that it was much better in the long run to preserve good staff relations by conscientiously implementing the terms of the collective bargaining agreement rather than to risk a breakdown in trust by violating the terms of the agreement on occasion for the sake of expediency. I, therefore, met with the P.F.T. union representative on Monday, January 9, 1978, and requested that she schedule a meeting of the building committee with me as soon as possible that week to discuss a proposed research project. This meeting was held on Thursday, January 12, 1978, and I made the following remarks to the six staff members who were present:

> Over the past two years I have had a sense of frustration about our reading program. It seems that we have made every effort to plan our reading program carefully, and we have invested a considerable amount of hard work in the teaching effort, but we have not been able to move our students beyond a certain point on the California Achievement Test. Although the standardized test performance of our students has been good in comparison to most of the other schools in District One, I have not felt comfortable in accepting zero growth. I believed that there was a need for me to take a more active part in our reading program by providing the kind of leadership that would help us to move beyond this point. Consequently, I have been attempting to update my knowledge of the reading process and to search for promising approaches that we might consider as we plan our schoolwide reading program.
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> Last spring I became very interested in a cooperative project which was being developed by the School District and the University of Pennsylvania. The project was designed to improve the instructional leadership skills of principals and to enable principals to improve the reading/communication arts curriculum in their schools. I am hoping that my participation in this project will help us to improve the test performance of our students.
>
> The project also includes an opportunity for principals to participate in a doctoral program and to undertake a study of their efforts to improve the reading/communication arts curriculum in their schools. Through my participation in the project, I became interested in the idea of conducting a doctoral study at Commodore on my effort to improve our curriculum in this area. My proposed study would focus on the extent to which an urban school principal could serve in an instructional leadership role by promoting curricular reform.

> I have developed an outline of my proposed study which, for the most part, called for me to collect the kind of data that would normally be necessary for me to have in order to function effectively in an instructional leadership capacity. I attempted to design this study in a way that would minimize any imposition on the staff. My proposal, however, is subject to approval by my dissertation committee. If I find that the requirements of my dissertation committee might create problems that could have a negative impact on my effectiveness as principal or be detrimental to staff morale, I am prepared to terminate my involvement in the research aspect of the project.

The members of the building committee were given an opportunity to raise questions and concerns at this point. The discussion produced no indication of objection to the study. The few questions that were raised centered around confidentiality issues. The consensus of the group was that it was a good idea for principals to become more knowledgeable about the reading process and more involved in reading program development.

I had planned to make the same presentation to the entire instructional staff on Tuesday, January 17, 1978, which was the date of our next regularly general meeting. However, school was cancelled on this date because of inclement weather, and the presentation had to be rescheduled for Tuesday, January 24, 1978. There were no negative reactions expressed to my presentation. The questions raised were entirely informational in nature. There was, again, general agreement that it was important for principals to become more knowledgeable about reading and more involved in reading program development.

I was considerably gratified by the positive manner in which the staff received my proposal because I felt that a potentially formidable barrier to the practicality of conducting this study had been removed. I maintained this rapport with the staff by keeping a low profile in my research activities, by making every effort to preserve confidentiality and anonymity, and by insisting that their participation in any data gathering not directly related to the implementation of the PCRP would be strictly voluntary. In spite of the voluntary nature of certain data collection efforts, I was most fortunate in receiving the voluntary cooperation of the entire faculty with my requests. I was also fortunate in resolving the problem of establishing rapport with the staff at a very early stage in the study. For many other District One administrators who participated in the project, the problem of establishing rapport with the staff persisted throughout most of the first year. This prompted Botel and Larkin to develop a suggested approach for establishing staff rapport which was circulated and discussed in the Education 920 seminar on May 12, 1978.

Data Collection Procedures

Throughout the study, data was required to assess needs, identify obstacles, monitor progress, and evaluate the extent of implementation. The following three stages might be thought of as the points around which the data was organized: 1) the pre-planning stage, prior to the actual introduction of the PCRP (January 24, 1978) and up to the time (March 14, 1978) when efforts were begun to implement it; 2) the actual implementation period (March 14, 1978 through March 28, 1980); and, 3) the evaluation period (April 7, 1980 through June 13, 1980) in which the extent of implementation was evaluated. Consequently, the design of the study required three phases of field-work activities, each with a primary focus on obtaining different types of data.

The first phase was concerned with formulating a description of the culture of the school prior to the introduction of the PCRP in order to provide support for my contention that a felt need for curricular reform was evident and to identify a variety of factors and conditions at the school that were likely to impact on the extent to which the PCRP was implemented. This phase extended from September 26, 1977, through March 13, 1978. The procedures which I developed to collect and record data during this phase were used consistently throughout the remaining two field-work phases of the research. These procedures were as follows: first, to spend as much time as possible in classrooms observing and listening; second, to make mental or brief written notes of events that seemed important for the study; third, to write down as soon as possible after these events key phrases and statements in a journal; four, to use these notes each evening as the basis for expanding the recollections of observations and conversations. Although I would have preferred to prepare my extended notes immediately after an event, I found that my schedule rarely permitted this. Consequently, I had to rely on filling in my notes at later times as the most reasonably effective way of recording activities of relevance for the study.

During the first phase of field-work activities, I conducted several informal interviews with staff members to obtain information about the history of the school and to obtain their impressions of our strengths, weaknesses, and major problems, especially in relation to our language arts program, in order to test my own perceptions of the "culture of language arts instruction" in the Commodore School at this particular time. Also, each weekend I carefully examined the weekly lesson plans which the teachers submitted to me every Friday afternoon in order to study the prevailing patterns of language arts instruction. In addition, an extensive collection of documents pertaining to Commodore School, District One, and the School District of Philadelphia was examined. These documents included: memoranda, faculty meeting notes, reading plans for Commodore School and for District One, curriculum guides in reading and language arts developed since 1970, reports of standardized test results, guides for principals, curriculum guides on literacy and test taking competency, statistical summaries of school system operations, and notes from staff development efforts over the past three years. I often used the information obtained from these documents as a point of departure in my disucssions with staff members, administrators, and other school system personnel to obtain a description of the culture of the school. The information that resulted from these various data collection procedures was analyzed to determine its consistency with respect to the issues under investigation.

The second phase of the study was initiated on March 14, 1978, as the first attempts to implement the PCRP were begun. Although the PCRP had been mentioned to the staff in January, 1978, efforts to involve the staff in a needs assessment relative to the PCRP were not undertaken until the middle of March, 1978. It was during this time of year that we normally began developing our schoolwide reading plan for the following school year, and I felt that this would be the most opportune time for me to introduce the PCRP and to structure our needs assessment for this planning effort in a way which would enable us to examine the effectiveness of our present reading/ language arts curriculum in providing a balanced emphasis on all four critical experiences. The needs assessment was based primarily on questions recommended by Botel (1977a) for administrators engaged in this process:

1. How well does our program provide all students with the four critical reading/communication arts experiences?
2. Are we diagnosing and placing students in basal-type materials with reliable curriculum related tests?
3. Where do we stand against national norms? (p. 27)

In order to gather more detailed base line data for the needs assessment, I circulated a questionnaire to the teachers at a faculty meeting on March 28, 1978, entitled "A Reading/Language Arts Activity Survey." This questionnaire was a modification of one developed by Heidi Gross, an associate of Botel's. The questionnaire was designed to gather data from teachers concerning their practices and attitudes toward the four critical experiences and to ascertain if changes occurred in their practices and attitudes over a period of time. Hence, this questionnaire was administered to the teachers at three different points: when they first heard about the PCRP; on January 16, 1979, five months after serious efforts to implement the PCRP had begun; and, on April 7, 1980, as planning activities were underway for the development of the schoolwide reading plan for the 1980-1981 School Year.

During this second phase of the study, I began to focus my informal observations and informal interviews on the attempt to implement the PCRP. Also, in order to provide a process to involve teachers in monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the PCRP and to obtain teacher feedback for formative evaluation and curriculum development, I developed an interview schedule to be used in conducting formal interviews with teachers. This interview schedule was based on one proposed by Botel (1978) which was designed to elicit teacher in-put for planning reading/communication arts program improvement (pp. 4-8). The administration of the teacher interview schedule was initiated on May 1, 1978, and was repeated in November, 1978; February, 1979; May, 1979; November, 1979; February, 1980; and, April, 1980. The interview sessions were held with all kindergarten, grade, and special education teachers. The sessions were scheduled at times that the teachers indicated were most convenient. Whenever necessary, I arranged classroom coverage for the sessions in order to avoid infringing on the preparation time provisions of the teachers' contract. The sessions usually lasted from fifteen to twenty minutes and the teachers seemed to feel at ease during the interview.

A different interview schedule was used to obtain data from the reading specialist teacher. This schedule was developed by Heidi Gross specifically as an evaluation format for reading specialists who were graduates of the University of Pennsylvania's Reading/Language Arts Program. The questions on this schedule were somewhat sensitive, and I was hesitant about asking our reading specialist teacher to participate since she was new to the position and serving in an acting capacity. However, once I explained the relevance of this instrument to my study and explained that it had no bearing whatsoever on the rating process, the reading specialist indicated that she would be most willing to participate. This interview schedule was conducted during the same time periods indicated for the formal teacher interviews.

The final phase of data collection placed stress on systematic classroom observations. It began on April 7, 1980, and ended on June 13, 1980. While the focus of the second phase was on the process of attempting to implement the PCRP, the focus on the final phase was on an assessment of the reality of the implementation of the PCRP in Commodore School. To guide this assessment a simple gradatum was established with three points. That is, the level would be one of the following: none, mechanical, or integrated. While fairly easy to apply criteria were developed for determining the attainment of these levels, the data could only be gathered by careful observation and analysis of participant behaviors. For example, it was conceivable that administrative or other pressures made it difficult for a teacher to admit openly that she has not implemented the plan while in fact this is the case.

Indeed, a teacher may have thought she had implemented it when in fact, due to misunderstanding, the implementation was only cursory, mechanical, or misguided. In order to assess the level of implementation, the following questions were asked:

(1) What evidence did participants give of understanding reading as a holistic activity?

(2) What changes in scheduling and use of materials were made to promote the implementation?

(3) Do the teachers effectively model the critical experiences they are implementing in their classrooms?

During this final assessment phase, extended observations in the classrooms were conducted to determine the quality of the implementation effort. The visits were scheduled in as randomized a fashion as possible. However, each teacher's lesson plans were used to identify a time in which some indication was given that there was likely to be some effort made to implement the PCRP. During this period each classroom was observed at least three times for a period of from fifteen to thirty minutes duration.

In order to obtain data from the teachers concerning the effectiveness of the implementation effort, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed in the teachers' mailboxes on June 12, 1980, along with a note requesting that the completed questionnaires be placed anonymously in my mailbox on June 13, 1980. This questionnaire was developed by Morton Botel and JoAnn Seaver and was designed to provide evaluation data from teachers regarding the implementation of the critical experiences curricula. Of the twenty-eight questionnaires that were distributed, twenty-five were returned. I made no effort to issue reminders to elicit the remaining three since I wanted to comply entirely with my original agreements about anonymity and confidentiality in the preparation of this study.

In addition to the systematic observations of the classrooms and the self-administered questionnaires, the basic research routines of collecting information from documents, informal observations and informal interviews continued during this phase of the study.

Ms. Sylvia Jones
Remarks transcribed from the University of Delaware Conference on Ethnography in Education, May 5, 1980.

First of all I would like to tell you something about myself and about my school. As you know it is located on [address] in West Philadelphia. I mention that because I don't know if people here know what is going on in Philadelphia...the closing of ten schools, well, [school] was one of the ten. And this week, we will remain open.

I have been a principal in the school system about three years. Three years ago, Domenic talked me into going into a doctoral program at the University of Penn. And I thought, wow, I have only been here a year, I can't think of doing work on a doctoral program. And he said, it would be very interesting. I said, "At the University of Penn?...I don't know about that!" I can say our concept of Penn has always been one of an Ivory Tower that sits on Walnut and Chestnut Streets and is very far removed from District One. Our schools are in what is called District One and the University of Penn sits right in the middle of District One. So I felt that maybe I better catch on to this opportunity that was being offered. So I joined Dr. Botel's program where we have to implement the PCRP in our school. We have to write about what took place during the implementation of the reading program.

Now I had read many dissertations of my friends and most of them have been studies on post-tests, pre-tests and measuring what are the differences in growth. To me that didn't say very much to an administrator about how you get in there and do something about reading. So I started taking courses and talking to the Dean and they started talking about something called ethnography. There are other techniques to find out what is or is not going on in your reading program. And one of those techniques was just looking and listening and just plan putting your ear to the ground to find out what is going on to find out what is being said, finding out what are the teachers saying among themselves, what are children saying...sometimes we don't even listen to what the children are saying and we have to listen. What are the feelings of the parents. The parents are important. This is one thing that I found out -- that parents really make a difference. That is a slogan around our school, "Parents make a difference." We not only start to listen and look, we also start to ask questions. During some of our course work, we were given techniques to question people, teachers mainly, asking them how do you like the Basal Reader? Do you think your children like it? Why don't you give more creative writing in class? Usually the answer was "I don't like to mark all that."

Well, as we progressed throughout the two years we found out that you don't have to mark "all that." You just don't mark up children's writing -- this is something that our teachers found out. Many of my questions revealed some very profound answers. I found out some things about myself too. I didn't expect to find that out, but I did.

Interviews, that is another technique that I used. I take my little pen and pad around and I interview. Some teachers view this as a threat. But we talk about it, and I explain to them what I am doing. And that I am writing a dissertation and gathering information and what ever I can get is going to help our children.

Tape recorder -- I took my tape recorder around and teachers permitted me to tape their class. Not only the teachers, I am talking about my aides, my peers, NTA (non-teaching assistants). I found out that everything makes the difference. Everything. And when I say everything, I am talking about the culture of the school. That is something very important. It involves not only the school staff, but the parents and the entire community. It also involves the physical plan of the building. As you walk into my building you may say, "How do children feel about walking into a building with paint peeling off the wall and crumbling on their heads and the buckets are in the hallway?" They feel differently in Domenic's school. In Domenic's school everything is spic and span. It makes a difference for a while until you start doing something about that. You start to consider those attitudes, have special programs, involve the parents. Are they concerned with how the building looks? Let them come in and help. We do something. But if my school is lower, it's lower (I won't go into how much lower).

I looked at California test scores, etc.; I looked at how many children were placed in Special Education, in other words, I tried to get the whole picture.

This is my third year and I am still looking at it. Now I am at the point of trying to pull together and make some sense of all this. And one big help has been Linda May. Linda is a researcher in my group. Linda is working with our sixth grade. The parents have been very cooperative. Linda observes the children in the halls, on the playgrounds, and listens for the kind of language that they use. Is this the same language that they use in class? (No, it is not.) Linda, again, is doing that listening and she is keeping it up. She talks to the children, the teachers and she goes out to the community. During the strike, Linda was down at the Board of Education and spoke for us. Again this is within the culture of the school, this is within the culture of the community, the political struggle. Politics is a great factor in the functioning of a school. (I saw it as a teacher and see it in my three years as principal.) Linda and I sat down and talked about what are the forces in the community that help make a difference in our school. What are the forces that are going to keep [school] open? Those same forces, out there that effect our school are the same forces that effect our reading program. They really do. And I was surprised.

I would just like to end in saying that I am really involved in what is going on at my school.

APPENDIX A.

First Annual
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

ETHNOGRAPHY in EDUCATION RESEARCH FORUM

MARCH 14, 15, 16 1980
(Fri 2pm - Sun 1pm)

HOUSTON HALL
3417 SPRUCE STREET

Registration
West Lounge
Friday, Noon-7:00
Saturday, 8:00-Noon

Forum Sponsored by:
The Center for Urban Ethnography
The Graduate School of Education
Office of Off-Campus Programs

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

2-5 P.M.	CONCEPTUALIZING THE TASK: PERSPECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
West Lounge	*Chairperson:* Peggy R. Sanday, University of Pennsylvania *Discussant:* Rosalie Cohen, Temple University "Doing Ethnographic Research in Curriculum" Suma Kurien, Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University "Capturing Reading in School and Community: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography" David Bloome, Kent State University "The Career Intern Program Revisited: A Case for the Centrality of Ethnography in Educational Research" Elaine Simon, Private Industry Council; David Fetterman, RMC Research Corporation "On the Use of Qualitative Methods in Policy Research: A Review of Three Multi-site Studies" Steven D. Johnson, Cornell University
7-7:45	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: DELL H. HYMES, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
West Lounge	*Chairpersons:* S. Tenby Owens, David M. Smith "Blitzkrieg and Protracted Warfare; or Wars of Movement and of Position; or Rist-Slapping"
8-9:30	SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS
Room 5	Functions of Language and Literature *Facilitator:* Peggy Miller, Columbia University
Room 6	Life-Long Education *Facilitator:* Mary Hufford, University of Pennsylvania
Room 7	Ethnography in Teacher Training *Facilitator:* James Larkin, University of Pennsylvania
Smith Room	Training Ethnographers (The Uses of Educators as Ethnographers) *Facilitator:* David M. Smith, University of Pennsylvania
Penniman Room	Curriculum Development and Implementation *Facilitator:* Jane White, University of Pennsylvania
Harrison Room	Ethnographic Contributions to Educational Policy *Facilitator:* Lynn Gregory, Temple University
East Balcony	Ethnography of Teaching *Facilitator:* Herbert Butler, Western Illinois University
9:30 West Lounge	RECEPTION: WINE AND CHEESE

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

8:30–11:30 THE ETHNOGRAPHER'S ROLE: ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

West Lounge

Chairperson: Elijah Anderson, Pennsylvania
Discussant: Jeffrey Shultz, Univ. of Cincinnati

"Looking into Families: Ethnography in the Private Domain"
Jennifer Bryce, Teachers College

"Can I Really Know What They Know: A Discussion of Participant Observation for the Mentally Retarded"
John J. Gleason, Harvard University

"Educational Decision Making in Students' Careers"
Lee Mihls, Univ. of California, L.J.

"Ethnographic Research in a School Setting"
Wm. Donner, Research for Better Schools

"Ethnography for the Study of Social Class: Variations in 'Educative Style'"
Vera Hamid, Teachers College

WORKSHOPS

8:30–10:00 Ethnographic Monitoring of the Acquisition of Language Arts Skills In and Out of School,
HSP University of Pennsylvania
Principal Investigator, Dell Hymes
Presenters, E. Anderson, R. Cerpa, A. Davis, S. Fiering, P. Gilmore, J. Larkin, L. May, D. Smith, M. Watkins

10:00–11:00 Youth Work National Policy Study: A Qualitative Assessment of Public Policies and Programs
HSP Related to Youth Unemployment, Cornell University
Principal Investigator, Ray Rist
Presenters, W. Holloway, S. Johnson, H. Wiltberger

11:30–1:00 LUNCH

1:00–4:00 CASE STUDIES: MODELS OF APPLICATION

West Lounge

Chairperson: Kevin Lyons, Pennsylvania
Discussant: John Grelis, Comegys El. School

"What Children Know That We Don't: Attitudes and Interaction in Elementary Classrooms"
Penelope Denton, Arizona State University

"Concepts of Family and Authority Models"
Amanda Dargon, University of Pennsylvania

"Case Studies on Change for Policy Makers"
H. Corbett, W. Firestone, RBS

"Conflict vs Consensus Models of Cultural Transmission and Ethnography of Decision Making"
Arlene P. Scanlon, Univ. of Delaware

1:00–2:30 Team Ethnography: A Plan for Co-operative Data Gathering and Analysis, Horace Mann-
HSP Lincoln Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University
Presenters, S. Chow, P. Clute, S. Goldman, B. Green, S. Kurien T. Orr

2:30–4:00 Industrial Literacy Project, Center for Applied Linguistics
Presenters, E. Jacob,
HSP S. Scribner

4:00–6:00 THE PRACTITIONER'S ROLE: EDUCATORS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO ETHNOGRAPHY

Chairperson: David M. Smith, University of Pennsylvania

West Lounge

Panelists: Robert Scanlon, Secretary of Education, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Eugene Hammer, Chairman, Department of Education, Wilkes College
Imani Brown, Teacher, Elementary School, Philadelphia
Marjorie Martus, Program Officer, Public Education, Ford Foundation
Domenic Matteo, Principal, Elementary School, Philadelphia

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

9:00-11:45 **ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TO LITERACY**

West Lounge

Chairperson: John Szwed, Pennsylvania
Discussant: Sylvia Scribner, Center for Applied Linguistics

"Interactive Socialization and Education of the Hmong Immigrants: Renegotiating the Learning Environment"
Erika Nagy Lert, Brown University

"Sharing Time: A Preparation for Literacy"
Sarah Michaels, UC, Berkeley

"Schooling and the Acquisition of Written Literacy: A Descriptive Case Study"
Susan Florio, Christopher Clark, Michigan State University

"Social Meanings of Literacy in an Alaskan Fishing Village"
Stephen Reder and Karen Reed Green, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

"Learning to 'Read' Stories"
Denny Taylor, Teachers College

WORKSHOPS

9:00-10:30 HSP
Neighboorhood Histories Project
Museum of Transportation, Boston, Massachusetts
Presenters: J. Bromberg, et al.

10:30-12:00 HSP
Literacy Development in the Community College, Arizona State University
Research Co-ordinators, D. Baldwin, B. Brandt, E. Fisk, K. Martens, M. Okun, D. Richardson, I. Sandler, K. Thomas, C. Vallejo
Research Associates, P. Denton, E. Warren

12:00-1:00 **CLOSING ADDRESS: FREDERICK ERICKSON, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

West Lounge

Chairpersons: S. Tenby Owens, David M. Smith

"Some Uses and Misuses of Ethnography in Education"

Credits

Conference Coordinator: Tenby Owens

Graduate Student Committee: Sandy Cortelyou, Elizabeth Dayton, William Donner, David Fitt, Kathy Hirsch-Pasek, Marcy Morgan, Ruth Paradise, Marilyn Smith, Janet Theophano, Ridie Wilson

Advisors: Perry Gilmore, Shirley Brice Heath, Dell Hymes, David Smith

Arrangements: Peter Bent, Kevin Lyons, Gretchen Rossman, Janet Theophano, Linda Wigfall, graduate students in the Educational Leadership Program

Coffee Service: Irv Grieff

Catering: Monroe Watkins, University of Pennsylvania

Duplicating Services: DPGraphics, Norman Johnson, Fred Mitchell

Special thanks to Nancy Bartman and Greta Longo for their secretarial and advisory help and to the many others at the Graduate School of Education for their assistance and patience.

APPENDIX B.

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOLS: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

5th Annual College of Education Symposium	May 23-24, 1980 John M. Clayton Hall University of Delaware	Symposium Organizers: A. Jon Magoon Aileen Webb Tobin

PROGRAM

FRIDAY, MAY 23

8:00	Registration, Coffee & Pastries		Lobby
8:45	Welcome	Dr. Frank B. Murray, Deane College of Education University of Delaware	Auditorium
9:00	Introduction & Symposium Panel	Dr. A. Jon Magoon College of Education University of Delaware	Auditorium
9:15	Ethnographic monitoring of the acquisition of reading/language arts skills in and out of schools	Dr. Dell Hymes Dr. David Smith University of Pennsylvania Domenic Mateo Sylvia Jones John Grelis Philadelphia Public Schools Perry Gilmore University of Pennsylvania	Auditorium
10:15	Coffee		Lobby
10:30	Ethnographic monitoring of the acquisition of reading/language arts skills in and out of schools	(continued)	Auditorium
11:30	Formal Reactions and Discussion	Dr. A. Jon Magoon, Moderator Dr. Courtney Cazden, Invited Discussant, Harvard Dr. William Foster, Reactor Dr. Peter Pelosi, Reactor Dr. Richard Venezky, Reactor College of Education University of Delaware	Auditorium

Memorandum

DATE: May 21, 1980

TO: Speakers, Discussants, and Reactors

FROM: Jon Magoon and Aileen Tobin

SUBJECT: Seating at the Symposium

In order to minimize unnecessary disruptions and to insure that everyone will have access to a microphone, we would appreciate it if you would plan to sit at the table in the front of the auditorium at the following times:

FRIDAY, MAY 23

8:45--11:30

Frank Murray
Jon Magoon
Dell Hymes
David Smith
Domenic Mateo
Sylvia Jones
John Grelis
Perry Gilmore

11:30--12:30

Jon Magoon
Dell Hymes
David Smith
Domenic Mateo
Sylvia Jones
John Grelis
Perry Gilmore
Courtney Cazden
Bill Foster
Peter Pelosi
Dick Venezky

2:00--3:30

Helen Gouldner
Ray Rist

3:45--4:45

Jon Magoon
Edward Slawski

4:45--6:00

Jon Magoon
Ray Rist
Edward Slawski
John Guthrie
(cont.)

Friday, 4:45--6:00

Joseph Johnson
Rita Fillos
Michael Hrybyk

SATURDAY, MAY 24

8:45--10:45

Aileen Tobin
Judith Green
Susan Conlin

10:45--12:15

Aileen Tobin
Susan Florio
Judith Green
Susan Conlin
John Ogbu

12:15--1:30

Judith Green
Susan Conlin
Susan Florio
John Ogbu
Joann Golden
Lucy Frontera
Doris Abrams
George Smith
Helen Gouldner
Paul Zisman

CONSERVE ENERGY SO ENERGY CAN SERVE YOU

Ethnographic Monitoring of Children's Reading Language Arts Skills In and Out of Schools

University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education

Project Duration: November 1979 - November 1980 (Continuation of a smaller effort carried out in 1978-1979.)

This is a team research project designed to examine children's learning both in and out of classroom contexts in four West Philadelphia elementary school communities. The research team consists of five predoctoral students trained in ethnography and four members of the University of Pennsylvania faculty, including a sociologist, two anthropologists, and a professor of education.

The thrust of investigation and analysis is to use ethnography as a supplement to what teachers can know of their pupils and their learning experiences. To accomplish this, we and the teachers are focusing on the relationship between demands on children as learners and as participants in interactions and on the relationship between the lives of children inside and outside of school as learning contexts.

Each of the site researchers works with two teachers to identify problems teachers encounter in language arts instruction. The researchers then examine these teacher-identified issues as they work themselves out in the classroom and in children's out-of-school lives.

The researcher findings are presented and discussed in weekly seminars with the entire research team and are shared with teachers both through regular meetings at the respective schools and through a series of teacher-research team workshops.

In addition to these monitoring activities of the site researchers, four other dimensions of the project are proving significant: 1) The director of research and a work-study student are doing an ethnographic documentation of the entire project. 2) The sociologist of the team is doing a life history case study of the principal of one of the schools, designed to explicate his role in the language arts instruction and school community relationships. 3) The project schools are involved in a major reading-language arts curriculum reform and the study should shed light on the issues that must be the focus in this effort. 4) This project is only one part of a larger set of relations the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education has developed with the schools of this district, the district in which the University is located. For example, of the principals of all four schools in the project are enrolled in a special education program at the University and are all, as part of their studies, examining the process of implementing the new reading curriculum.

Members of the Research Team:

Elijah Anderson, Brenda Bailey, Betty Jean Baugh, Imani Brown, Robert Cerpa, Ave Davis, Susan Fiering, Perry Gilmore, John Grelis, Dell Hymes, Sylvia Jones, James Larkin, Mary Lucas, Domenic Matteo, Linda May, David Smith, Margie Stanford, Shirley Thompson, Robert Waters, Monroe Watkins, Carrie Williams

RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

CONFERENCE

Friday, October 12, 1979

4:30 Registration
p.m. Lobby, Graduate School of Education

7:15 Opening Address
Stitler Hall, Room B-21
The Place of Ethnography In Educational Research
DELL HYMES: Dean, Graduate School of Education
Introduction: Kevin J. Lyons, Director
Off-Campus Programs

8:00 Wine & Cheese Reception
Rooms D9/10, Graduate School of Education

Saturday, October 13, 1979

9:00 Registration
a.m. Lobby, Graduate School of Education

Session I

9:30 Room C-12
DAVID SMITH: Univ. of Penn.
What Ethnography Can Tell Us About Schools
Introduction: Ms. Ilene Kones

Room B-26
JOSEPH C. BECKHAM: Univ. of Penn.
The Interface Between Legal Issues and Educational Policy
Introduction: Ms. Gretchen Rossman

Room B-27
CAROLYN BROWN: Pa. State Dept. of Ed.
Current Research Projects in PDE
Introduction: Ms. Dulaney Ogden

Room C-13
JOSEPH JACOVINO: Phila. School System
Study of Gaming and Simulation in the Classroom
Introduction: Mr. Walter Brown

Room C-23
BRUCE W. KOWALSKI: West Chester Area Schools
A Study of the West Chester Area School District Desegregation Plan
Introduction: Mr. Timothy Cross

10:30 Coffee Break
Lounge Area, 1st Flr., Graduate School of Ed.

Session II

10:45 Room C-23
LINDA MAY and SUSAN FIERING: Univ. of Penn.
Ethnographic Monitoring Project
Introduction: Dr. James Larkin

Room C-13
DOMENIC MATTEO: Phila. School System
Status of PCRP Implementation in Philadelphia Schools

Room B-27
CAROLYN BROWN: Pa. State Dept. of Ed.
Current Research Projects in PDE
Introduction: Ms. Dulaney Ogden

Room C-12
DAVID SMITH: Univ. of Penn.
What Ethnography Can Tell Us About Schools
Introduction: Ms. Ilene Kones

Room B-26
PERRY GILMORE: Univ. of Penn.
Insights for Education: The Case of an Invented Language for Two
Introduction: Mr. Walter Brown

Session III

1:30 Room B-27
LINDA MAY and SUSAN FIERING: Univ. of Penn
Ethnographic Monitoring Project
Introduction: Dr. James Larkin

Room C-13
JOSEPH JACOVINO: Phila. School System
Study of Gaming and Simulation in the Classroom
Introduction: Mr. Walter Brown

Room C-23
BRUCE W. KOWALSKI: West Chester Area School
A Study of the West Chester Area School District Desegregation Plan
Introduction: Mr. Timothy Cross

Room C-12
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Introduction: Ms. Dulaney Ogden

Room B-26
JOSEPH C. BECKHAM: Univ. of Penn.
The Interface Between Legal Issues and Educational Policy
Introduction: Ms. Gretchen Rossman

(A)

HARRIET TUBMAN SCHOOL: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Ave Maria Davis

PAGE

I. THE COMMUNITY

Community Boundaries and Overview 1
History 6
Demography 10
Churches 12
Businesses 15
Recreation 20
Civic Cooperation and Leadership 25
Case Study: A Civic Organization 28

II. INTERLOCKING PROFILES

Preface 35
Mrs. Porter, Sara, Mrs. Mercer 35
Discussion 49

III. PARENT INTERVIEWS

Introduction 54
Discipline and Instruction 56
A Good School 59
Home and Community 66
"Black English" 75
Reading and Writing 76

IV. READING AND WRITING AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction and Overview 82
Structure and Tone 84
Observations within a Church 86

V. CONCLUSION 92

I. THE COMMUNITY

BOUNDARIES AND OVERVIEW

Harriet Tubman School is located in a residential area. Immediately to the west of the school is a government housing project, which features low (one-level) and high-rise (as many as sixteen floors) buildings. In other directions, predominantly low-income housing prevails. Approximately half the residents of the housing project are legally within the boundaries from which Harriet Tubman draws its children. Children of other residents of the "projects", as the housing is called, must, at least officially, attend nearby elementary schools in whose boundaries they fall.

The Harriet Tubman school boundaries are contained within a radius of roughly one hundred blocks that altogether form a natural triangle, with Harriet Tubman located just shy of the center. Two sides of that triangle would seem to be natural school boundaries to a stranger entering the area, because those sides are (1) a heavily travelled commercial avenue, featuring retail stores, restaurants, bars, and a variety of other small businesses, and (2) a well-travelled street which is a dividing line between the two halves of the projects as well as a connecting artery for a major transit intersection. The third side of the triangle, which defines legal school boundaries, seems arbitrary because only two blocks beyond is another major avenue, which, linked with the two previously described arteries, would seem to form boundaries that, because of the transit and residential patterns, would be distinguishable to any outsider. Conversations with residents reveal that the third side of the school-boundary triangle, prior to the fifties, was itself an active thoroughfare for blacks; at present, its character is indistinguishable from that of adjacent blocks.

For purposes of the current study, the observable natural boundaries formed by the three major transit thoroughfares have been used as a reference point for observing the community surrounding Harriet Tubman; patterns, as they arise, that override the choice of those boundaries will be noted for what they are worth.

School boundaries, at any rate, are not strictly adhered to, the more so in the case of Harriet Tubman, which is a target or academics-plus school for back-to-basics instruction and is permitted, therefore, to draw children from the entire district. Other reasons for enrolling children from outside the boundaries include the following: (1) preferences for siblings of previous enrollees whose parents have moved outside the boundaries; (2) enrollees whose parents have given a false address, that of a relative or friend living within school boundaries; (3) preferences given to the children of former graduates; and (4) sympathetic and instructional links with particular pre-school programs.

In addition, parents of children living within the boundaries may elect for a variety of reasons to send their children to a school, public or private, other than Harriet Tubman. Reasons may include the above, as applied to another school, or a reasons such as the following: Harriet Tubman has an older building than another public school close by and doesn't look as "clean". Within the triangle, there is one elementary school other than Harriet Tubman, a parochial school with a history of serving various ethnic minorities. Parents who can afford to do so and who believe that their children will receive a better and more protective education in the Catholic school may send their children to St. Mary's.

Inside the triangle, the major number of structures are low to low-middle-income residencies, including single-family homes as well as apartment and rooming houses, most of the latter of which were at one time single-family homes. There are few blocks which do not contain at least one and usually more vacant and/or boarded-up properties, some of which are gutted by fire or ravaged by vandalism and often serving as play areas for children (surreptitiously) or gathering places for men engaged in crap-shooting or activities of a like nature. On the other hand, many properties, roughly a third of the triangle, are well-kept individual dwellings, most of them sprinkled throughout the area. Roughly ten blocks can be pointed to as having consistently ordered and cared-for residencies.

At the westernmost, broad side of the triangle, which tapers to a point at its eastern end, are the government housing projects. The eastern section of the triangle contains a housing development that was constructed for senior citizens by the church which has the largest Protestant congregation in the triangle. In addition, vacant lots are sprinkled throughout the triangle, and residents speculate continually about the fate of these lots. Among the speculations are that (1) the city wants to tear down--or allow to fall down--as many houses as possible so that it will be easier eventually to remove all black residents and rebuild the area for whites to occupy and (2) one or both of the two universities (or hospitals) in that section of the city intend to expand their holdings and influence to include first the vacant areas, then all the triangle. Vacant lots and houses are also a target of controversy among the civic-minded, as to what should be done to develop/rehabilitate them.

Within the triangle, institutions with education as their primary function include the two elementary schools, Harriet Tubman and St. Mary's, as well as several pre-school programs. In addition, the churches have their own Bible-study groups and Sunday schools for religious instruction.

There are approximately fifteen churches inside and bordering the triangle. Churches by far are the most conspicuous institution. Denominations include Catholic, Pentecostal and Holiness, A.M.E., and Baptist. Buildings themselves range from the traditional stone structures with steeples and leaded-glass windows to a variety of adaptations based on the resources at hand--e.g., renovated garage with simulated stained glass, refurbished movie theater, store-front and house-front models.

Small businesses from a third type of institution--barber and beauty shops, candy stores, corner grocery stores, an occasional take-out sandwich shop, a few bars, a funeral home, a thrift store.

The prevailing atmosphere of the triangle, however, is residential, low-income. The casual passer-through would see an essentially run-down, neglected area, with occasional indications, such as the architecture of the larger churches and some of the houses, that the area had seen much better days.

In comparison with surrounding communities, all of which have names, the triangle is a no-man's land, an expression used on occasion by residents, particularly in lamenting the fact that no funds are forthcoming from the city or elsewhere to make the area a target of revitalization. The designation "triangle" is used at times by residents to identify their community, although the term is not official--that is, you cannot use it in other areas of the city and expect anyone to know what community you are referring to. "Triangle" as a name is inadequate unless used by residents as an in-term serving the purposes of the moment, because depending on your perspective, the triangle(s) formed by the convergence of the major arteries may be of varying proportions.

Other terms used to designate the area may be "up the way" or "down the way", depending on the direction of departure. A person speaking to another while standing in the community east of the triangle would say, "Are you going up the way?" in referring to the triangle. However, that same person, if standing in a community either to the far west of the triangle or southwest or northwest would say, "Are you going down the way?" Similarly, the community east of the triangle (down the way) is the "bottom", and the community to the far west is the "top". The triangle itself in the latter set of designations might accurately be called "the top of the bottom." The designations can be understood in light of the fact that the farther west (towards the top) or "up the way" one travelled, the more privileged were the neighborhoods economically--so that at any point along the way, whether "up" or "down" or "bottom" or "top", the speaker would be stating his or her placement geographically according to the economic and social realities.

The major service agencies in the community are located either on one side or the other of the streets (or avenues) bordering the triangle or are located just outside the triangle, within a block or two. Those agencies include city recreational facilities; health service facilities for physical, dental and emotional problems; a "Y"; and one federally funded agency for combatting poverty. In addition, a post office, private legal and real-estate agenceis, and a commercial skating rink are located at the borders of the triangle.

The major commercial avenue which borders one side of the triangle features retail and wholesale stores sells housewares, plumbing fixtures, auto hardware, and the like. Also on the "avenue", as it is called, are steak shops, barber and beauty shops, numerous bars, used furniture stores, and miscellaneous small businesses.

Several bus routes frame the triangle, taking passengers into the downtown area of the city and back again. However, only one bus travels inside the triangle, making connections with lines outside the triangle but also taking passengers into the heart of the downtown area and back again.

One agency head, who had worked previously in two other low-income areas of the city, stated that she felt the triangle residents were better off than residents of many low-income areas because of the number and variety of services available and also because transit routes are convenient. There is no sense of geographical isolation from other parts of the city. Her appreciation of the accessibility of the area is shared by others. If no other reason is given by residents of all descriptions for believing their community must eventually be "taken over", the point of its strategic location is always mentioned. "All you have to do is stay on the avenue and you're in the heart of the city or you're in the suburbs, whichever you want to be." Residents are accustomed to seeing rush-hour automobile traffic on the avenue taking suburbanites into their city offices and out again.

During winter daytime hours the community is usually quiet. Streets are empty except during the hours that people are going to work and leaving work or the hour that the schools release pupils and staff. Winter nights inside the triangle are still and quiet. The obvious activity is occurring on the avenue, inside the bars or with occasional groups of young and older men fraternizing along the sidewalks.

When the weather is warmer, elderly people can be seen sitting on porches or tending their plants and talking to neighbors. Perhaps an older person will be seen trimming a hedge or walking a dog. Particularly near the eastern corner of the triangle, pockets of men between the ages 20-50 can be seen seated on porch steps or gathered outside one of the few bars internal to the triangle or standing on the porch of a vacant house. Children play their line games, called "steps", on the sidewalks or in the street near the curb. Ten or more children of varying ages can often be seen during the day off and on until dark, playing group singing and dancing games. One parent of a ten-year-old boy stated that she started restricting the movements of her son, telling him where she had "better not see him again", when she passed a corner one day and saw him watching a group of boys his age playing "craps" within yards of older men doing the same thing. She complained about the insensitivity of "some adults", who made it difficult to raise children in the way she felt was proper.

Other triangle activities during warm weather include block parties and outdoor church fairs, the latter of which can last several days, with food provided and recreation for the children of the neighborhood. Church fairs are often announced to the public by use of homemade, printed banners attached to the outside of the building. The banners are used in the triangle to announce varying types of events--e.g., political rallies; church elebrations around a theme (Year of the Family); a block party (Galaxy Seven); or a protest (New Elevators--No More Repairs) conducted in the streets.

During all seasons, the movement of people is more obvious on the avenue and in the government housing project than elsewhere. The projects form a community within themselves, and residents often don't identify with the rest of the triangle as community, especially if they did not grow up in the area. The projects are located officially in a neighborhood that has a name, although school boundaries as well as the natural geographical boundaries described earlier, tie at least half the project buildings to the triangle. City census tracts place Harriet Tubman itself in the named area although most of the school's mileage (as opposed to population density) for drawing children is confined to the "no-man's land" that is the major portion of the triangle.

HISTORY

People of German descent predominated in the triangle in the middle to late nineteenth century and were joined by Irish people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The resident Roman Catholic Church was German National. In the early 1900's Irish people were sufficiently represented in the area that names in the church records began to reflect the population change (The church now has a black congregation). A lesser number of Jews resided in the area as well as a number of blacks. Roman Church records show the name of at least one black person as early as 1900. Blacks in the area socially and vocationally were represented by a greater number of "upper-class persons"--teachers and post office workers and a few doctors--proportionately than whites, who were mainly blue-collar workers. Whites worked for the railroad; poorer blacks worked for a local laundry. The triangle, in comparison with surrounding neighborhoods, was always middle ground, neither as desirable as areas further west nor as undesirable as the community immediately east. The movement of improvement for whites was from two-storey houses to three-storey houses in the immediate area, then farther west and finally out of the city and into the suburbs. The movement for blacks was from side streets, where poorer families lived, to certain main streets in the triangle, then farther west.

Reasons for the shifts in population are manifold. Contributing factors were the great migrations of blacks from the South after the World Wars, with the consequent flight of whites, as well as more local economic reasons, such as the failure of the railroad which had employed many resident whites. Stability of population was never as much a surety as the old-timers like to imagine, however, as people were always seeking to "better themselves" by moving in whatever direction geographically constituted improvement in their sights. The shifts were class shifts, then racial shifts of population, followed by more class shifts. Finally there was a move away from the neighborhood by blacks who could afford to move. Reasons for their flight included the fact that real estate speculation by whites who had bought houses cheaply from owners, anxious to leave the area, resulted in the prevalence in inexpensive apartments and quarters of a nature that attracted transient residents rather than permanent ones; those properties suffered indifferent care at the hands of both absentee landlords and temporary tenants. Further removal, both forced and voluntary, occurred when government housing was built, bringing into the neighborhood large numbers of low-income blacks and welfare recipients. Many blacks left for the same reasons the whites had left before them: to reside in neighborhoods that represented economic and social betterment as well as to flee new residents of uncertain means.

Relations among the races through the twenties, thirties and forties--throughout the years the area was mixed racially--were "cordial", according to the testimony of older residents. "Everybody got along fine," is the statement consistently used to describe race relations through that period, which older residents think of as having been a golden age. Business was booming on the main avenue; people did not have to go far afield to satisfy their shopping needs. Although the representation of goods and services was much the same as now, quality of merchandise was of a higher order than currently; that is, quality was competitive with what residents could find in other shopping areas of the city.

On the other hand, evidences are that racial boundaries were understood. Certain theaters were either off-limits to blacks or were accessible only at certain times or under certain circumstances--i.e., certain days with seats in the balcony or on the upper floor. Also, it was understood that blacks went mainly to Harriet Tubman and Jews to another public school, Irish mainly to another. The whites who attended Harriet Tubman before it became a black school and then sporadically for a few years through the late twenties were mainly Irish. Certain clubs and recreational spots were black; others were Irish. Black-owned businesses were originally confined to a lesser avenue in its accessibility in the triangle than the main thoroughfare.

According to the accounts of older male residents, there were "racial wars" at times among the children and young adults, but the skirmishes consisted of hand-to-hand fighting, rock throwing, and the like. As one man said, "Nobody killed anybody."

The thirties, forties and fifties were the golden years of Harriet Tubman, by the accounts of school personnel and former pupils and residents. Those were the years when the school had as its principal the woman around whose personality and leadership the tradition--exemplary appearance, behavior and scholarship--was begun.

Harriet Tubman was one of four public, elementary schools in the city which were preferred schools for blacks--i.e., schools to which black teachers and other personnel were sent instead of to the schools with predominantly white or all-white student bodies. The board of education maintained two lists--according to the impressions of teachers, administrators and interested residents--one for black teachers and one for whites. And the black teachers were directed to the four schools with black student populations, of which Harriet Tubman was one. As such, the school became a concentrated focus and expression of the values, aspirations, concerns and activities of a core of black educators. Those educators and their black charges constituted a select group--a cultural enclave surrounded by schools that were overwhelmingly or exclusively white--who were self-conscious about their existence and the significance of it. The mission of Harriet Tubman's educators was admittedly not just to teach basic skills but to drill the students in the ways--manners, speech, appearance and knowledge--of cultivated or "cultured" preparedness.

During the years of racial shift to a predominantly black residency--the late thirties and, most especially, the forties--black-owned businesses moved to the major thoroughfare alongside older, white-owned firms, some of the latter of which remain to the present day. Episcopal and other churches became Baptist or A.M.E. or Holiness in the fifties. Theaters were converted into churches.

By the fifties the triangle had only a few Irish and Jewish older residents remaining. The fifties and the early sixties brought the dramatic upheavals of urban renewal--or "removal", as it's called by residents. In the mid-fifties government housing was built--the housing that is pointed to by both school personnel and triangle residents as being the generating point of numerous setbacks to the community: crime, drugs, transiency, school behavior problems. The impact of the projects is both real and imagined; project residents tend to be scapegoats when the source of an ill cannot be identified--e.g., the culprits in a wave of purse-snatching or a hold-up or burglary. Project residents themselves, original residents, point to a time when the projects were built that that buildings and the atmosphere were "beautiful." They, too, describe deterioration and blame "irresponsible young mothers" or "indifferent administrators" or, casually, a host of other causes. Project residents who, or whose families are, indigenous to the area do not see themselves necessarily as being part of an unfortunate turn in the historical continuity of the area: the projects brought new blood and a youthful vitality to neighborhoods that were already on the downswing.

The consensus of residents encountered in this study--project residents and triangle residents--is that the neighborhood is no worse than it was ten years ago, and, in some ways, is better. Gang activity has lessened; traffic in the hard drugs is either diminished or less obviously prevalent; hold-ups of businesses and house break-ins related to drug traffic are less frequent occurrences. Rarely does anyone say that the neighborhood is steadily declining; a more popular belief is that the decline has gone about as far as it will go; and the area, because of forces that will act upon it from outside--specifically, the reclaiming of the area by whites--will eventually become prime residential and commercial territory.

DEMOGRAPHY

School boundaries for Harriet Tubman occupy most of one city census tract and a portion of another. U.S. census figures for both tracts reflect steady population decreases between 1950 and 1970. In both decades population density for the two tracts was moderate as compared with the rest of the city.

Total population figures for Tracts A and B combined were approximately 12,500 persons in 1960 and 9,000 in 1970. Exact figures for the triangle, as described in the Community Overview, are not available, as that area straddles both tracts. However, a reasonable estimate is 4,500 to 5,000 persons in 1970. The total population decreased by about one-third in the decade 1960 to 1970. Census figures show non-whites accounting for 95 to 96 per cent of the population from 1960 onward. Between the 1960 and the 1970 census, the numbers of non-whites of ethnic backgrounds other than black increased, although the increase was small--roughtly three to four times the number listed in the 1960 census but accounting for only a fraction of the total population.

The percentage of residents of both tracts below the age of nineteen was above the city average, especially for the tract that includes the housing projects, in 1960. From the 1960 census to the 1970 census a decrease was evident in numbers of young people, as in total population figures. Population per household in the 1970 census was roughly average for the city (2.96) but slightly higher for the tract that includes the projects (Tract A).

Median family income was among the lowest in the city as reflected in the 1959 and 1969 census figures for both tracts.

Unemployment figures in both tracts in 1960 and 1970 were among the highest in the city (6.0 or more). The numbers of white-collar workers employed showed increase in the 1970 census; however, figures for the total numbers employed dropped.

According to 1970 census, 20.0 to 34.9 per cent of residents of both tracts, twenty-five years of age or older, had attained high school diplomas, as compared with a city average of 39.9 per cent.

Housing figures, in accord with population decrease, showed decreases in percentages in total number of occupied units and total owner-occupied units in 1960 and 1970 in both tracts. There was an increase in vacant units in Tract B in 1970 by approximately seventy-five units. Percentage increases in housing occurred also in the numbers of multi-unit structures available in both tracts. At the same time, the percentage of overcrowded housing units declined for Tracts A and B between 1960 and 1970 by roughly six points.

CHURCHES

Of the fifteen or so churches, the ones that are not traditional in structure are sometimes difficult to identify because a housefront may serve as home for a small congregation, and the only indication of the building's use may be a hand-printed board in one window, giving the name of the church, the pastor's name, and the hours of service. Denominations represented are Roman Catholic (one church), Holiness and/or Pentecostal, A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal), and Baptist. Baptist churches outnumber the others.

Most pastors live outside the triangle; a few who are elderly reside near their churches. In one instance, the pastor is semi-retired and ailing. He is the founder of the church next door to his house and has lived in the neighborhood for much of his mature life. He has seen his congregation dwindle and complains that people don't realize how much it costs to keep a building operative; the church itself is modest but traditional in structure. The congregation is composed of people of middle to elderly years. There is virtually no youth component. The church in question is typical of the smaller institutions; the congregations are dwindling and are composed of older people, many of whom once lived in the immediate neighborhood but now reside farther afield. Pastors complain that although Sunday school hours are posted, children do not come. Only in the larger churches, with congregations numbering in the hundreds or more, is there evidence of substantial youth participation.

Typically only a small percentage--perhaps 5%--of any congregation in the triangle is composed of residents. Others are people who lived in the triangle or bordering neighborhoods at one time and have moved away (or whose families lived there once) or people who live in the general area of the city (west, as opposed to east, south or north) that the triangle is a tiny part of, or people who never lived either in the triangle or in bordering communities. One pastor of a large church stated that 75% of his congregation were geographically linked with people from two small Southern communities. Relatives and friends who followed others North during the migrations of blacks from South to North between and after the World Wars tended to attend a common church even if they weren't able to reside in the same section of the city. Pastors may or may not know much about the community of which the church is a part. In one instance, the pastor said he had heard of Harriet Tubman; however, he was not certain which direction the school was located or how close by it was (a matter of a few blocks). In other instances, pastors have grown up in the general community, if not in the triangle itself, and are active in civic and political organizations affecting the triangle, whether they are currently residents or not.

Churches are easily the most visible institutions. Cooperative behavior among them, however, is limited and is dependent on factors not necessarily related to commonality of denomination or geography. One pastor stated that the pastors of churches with strong "born again" doctrines tended to know one another, although my observations were not such either to prove or disprove the contention. One of the larger churches invites the congregations of neighboring churches to a community get-together each year. On the last occasion, three churches out of the ten invited sent representatives. The attitudes are not antagonistic, however, but non-involved.

In spite of the visibility of the churches in numbers, their impact on the triangle is uncertain. What impact there is, is not so much organizational--program, institutional assertives--as individual. Triangle residents don't necessarily attend the churches in the neighborhood, and the church congregations are not representative of the triangle. On the other hand, key individuals--several teachers at Harriet Tubman; persons active in civic and political activities affecting the triangle; the head of the tenants' council at the federal housing project--do attend churches in the triangle. Also, at least three of the pastors are most vocal and active in triangle concerns. Two of those pastors grew up in or near the triangle.

There is no organizational link between the churches and Harriet Tubman. As stated earlier, knowledge of and interest in the school varies from pastor to pastor. Several pastors stated that there should be more contact between personnel of the school and churches, and one pastor was hopeful that my inquiries and activities, as researcher, might help to bring about some mutually beneficial interaction. Several pastors stated that they were interested in starting a tutorial program as part of the church's services to the community; in one instance, a program had been started and cancelled for lack of consistent volunteer help. Pastors generally did not know the principal of Harriet Tubman personally; several said they knew "of him".

Except for the church participation of individuals, the major link between school and church is that of the children. The children of the triangle participate in summer activities--Bible school and day camp and free breakfast programs--and such activities as Scouting and after-school recreational/tutorial programs when the latter are in force. One pastor said that the children come to church activities first and that they sometimes bring the adults in later.

Children less frequently or consistently attend Sunday school. The hope of the churches is that the special programs will attract the attention of the children, who will then become regular church attenders. In fact, one church person complained that "when the food is gone, the children are, too."

In the one Bible school I observed, teachers tended to be non-residents and assistants, residents. The leader of the school, who was a public school teacher (not Harriet Tubman) on vacation envisioned herself and her program as something of a cultural, religious and educational oasis. She saw her mission as being that of upgrading the youngsters--neighborhood children and volunteer aides--in their cultural, educational and religious awareness.

An incident illustrates the fact that individual churches are "communities" within themselves, relating primarily, if not exclusively, within the ranks of their own and not to other church communities:

Over a period of some weeks, a representative of one of the larger churches was engaged in the task of finding living space for an elderly member. The member had no living relatives and was functioning in a state of ill health. Efforts to turn up space within the congregation were proving fruitless; several possibilities had been explored, and one temporary placement had been secured, which then had proven inappropriate.

One institution within the community is a conspicuously large, modern nursing home operated by the church of another denomination. The nursing home is within easy walking distance of the church in question and had been founded to serve primarily resident of the area--triangle and surrounding communities--regardless of denominational preference.

To an outsider, it seemed a "natural" that the nursing home should have been one of the first possibilities explored, since the elderly member would receive professional care and owuld be residing in a clean, bright facility in the neighborhood to which she was accustomed.

Having observed the representative's frustrations in locating a suitable place, I finally ventured to ask why he did not try to place the woman in the nursing home described, a facility that he passed at least several times in the course of a week, driving to and from church activities. He seemed surprised, then reflective. "You know," he said, "I never thought about it." Clearly, he identified the nursing home with the other church. There was no antagonism involved, just a lack of seeing.

Pastors may be acquainted with one another personally, but the knowledge is gained apart from institutional cooperation--i.e., personal introductions, service on civic boards and committees.

BUSINESSES

Businesses internal to the triangle are mainly small proprietorships: barber and beauty shops, corner grocery stores and candy stores, combined take-out eateries/groceries. There is one funeral home and a laundromat. Owners generally have lived in the triangle for 30 or more years and can readily talk about "then" as opposed to "now". They are more likely than pastors to have knowledge of the history of Harriet Tubman and the community. Of owners randomly approached, every one knew either a current or past principal (or both) of Harriet Tubman and had something to say about the character of the school. All felt that the school had always been a good school (in translating "good", they would mention graduates or general reputation or the character of a principal or the strictness of discipline) and that the neighborhood had once been a most desirable place to live. One particular barbershop has been in its present location for 35 years and has maintained much of its clientele. Customers range in age between 40 and more than 70 years. Customers know one another and engage in a steady stream of banter with the proprietor, a man in his late 60's. Of the two barbershops I observed on random occasions, the one on the avenue had younger customers and a less personal atmosphere, reflecting the fact that businesses on the avenue draw a greater diversity of clientele than those inside the triangle.

On one occasion the barber in the triangle asked me what I was doing at Harriet Tubman, and I said, "parent interviews at present." I mentioned that I had failed to make contact with the interviewee for that day, and he suggested that I interview his customers. There was much joking about whom I should interview:

Barber: Bob here, he's the one to talk to; he's been around a long,long time.

Bob: Not me, not as long as Mac over there. He's the one to interview. He can tell you 'bout things going way back. (Laughter.)

Bob and Mac had attended Harriet Tubman when the original black principal was there. Bob couldn't remember at first who the principal was although he had attended Harriet Tubman much later than Mac, who was in his late 70's.

Barber: Is she still alive?

Mac: I don't think so.

Barber: Seemed as if she was around for a long time.

Interviewer: Someone told me this once was the "toastie" neighborhood (neighborhood of blacks who were lighter-complexioned and well-off economically and who presumably considered themselves to be "better than" other blacks).

Bob: Oh, no. (Agreement from others.) That was on the other side of ______ Street (a neighborhood farther west, or at the "top").

Barber: Fairfield Avenue (current school boundary which appears arbitrary, because a more travelled avenue is only two blocks beyond) used to be "the place." Everybody came to Fairfield Avenue. Also to the club on _____ Street. People came from all over the city. (Sports hero) used to come all the time to that club; you know other people came if people like him were coming.

Mac; The numbers men out there (Fairfield Avenue) kept their pockets so full they couldn't cram any more money into them, so many people were playing. (Others agree; head nods, grunts.)

Bob lived some distance from the shop but came back to his old neighborhood to get his hair cut. "I got my first cut here." Mac still lived in the triangle. Although the three other customers didn't enter the conversation directly, it was evident from their smiles and head nods in response to what others were saying, as well as from the barber's periodic attempts to "pull them out" that they were at one time or currently residents.

The men speculated about my origins, then began telling me about their Southern relatives. Bob said that black people live better in the South than in the North. The barber countered that there are "slums everywhere and good neighborhoods everywhere" and that "if you go 'way from 'round here (immediate community), you can find some fine neighborhoods."

The conversation was noteworthy in that it reflected several trends: (1) the attitude that tended to see the better off people as having lived farther west, (2) consensus that the neighborhood had deteriorated from a former position of having widespread appeal, (3) identification with neighborhood roots, and (4) identification of Harriet Tubman and its history with the character of a principal.

There is no organization internal to the triangle that links the businessmen. Although there is a businessmen's association on the major commercial avenue, it has not extended membership offers to businesses not located on the avenue itself.

The association on the avenue is composed of black and white owners of businesses; in fact, the most active members in providing financial support and attending meetings are white. According to the spokesperson for the association, 70 to 75 percent of the association's support is provided by whites. Not all the avenue's businessmen are members of the association; quite a few are in a state of quiet disaffection because of suspicions, justified or not, about the role of the organization in lobbying for benefits for the best interests of most as opposed to the interests of a few. Some of the disaffection is based upon differences with the spokesperson for the association, an outspoken and energetic black woman who provokes admiration or animosity among residents of the avenue more readily than indifference. My inquiry as to why whites were more supportive than blacks of the association brought the response from her that whites see their support as being "good business". She stressed that the practical motivation was more basic to the issue than the humane where whites were concerned: the vulnerability of white owners in a predominantly black area and their desire to keep the businesses afloat and lucrative.

An example of a white owner who is not a member of the association is Paul Stein, who has operated a hardware store on the avenue since the early thirties. Stein, who is Jewish and in his seventies, spoke readily about Harriet Tubman and the neighborhood. He was able to tell me about older blacks he knew who had attended Harriet Tubman although he faltered somewhat when asked whether Harriet Tubman was in his memory a black school exclusively; he did say that blacks mostly attended but that there were some whites. Stein was anxious to present a picture of racial harmony through the late twenties and the thirties and forties, "before the foreigners came." As it turned out, "the foreigners" to him were the blacks who had come North from the South during the great migrations as well as the newcomers to the neighborhoods from other parts of the city. He stated repeatedly that the blacks, Jews, Irish and German people who lived in the community through the era of relative population stability got along fine and that there were no racial problems at all. "Everybody was the same." The circumstances in his view were "beautiful". Stein knew many of his customers by name. He reminisced about the days when the avenue was a "promenade"--when people dressed up in their finery in the late afternoons and the evenings and strolled conspicuously along the "Pike", as it was called then, to be seen and admired and to see and admire others.

Stein's clientele, like that of most other businesses on the avenue, is primarily, if not exclusively, black. In speaking of the articles of used furniture and other odds and ends blocking the sidewalk across the street from his store, he waved his hand, as though to sweep the offending articles away. "There was none of this. It was beautiful--beautiful."

Stein had been robbed twice. He had spent several days in the hospital for a bullet wound sustained on the first occasion, and he showed me bullet holes in cans of nails and in the side of a shelf to demonstrate the ricocheting path one bullet had taken.

Stein lives in the suburbs. On being asked the inevitable question, "Why don't you move your store?" he answered that at his age he had no place to go.

Stein is one of the numbers of white businessmen whose family histories are rooted in the neighborhood. Although he--and others like him--no longer lives in the triangle, there is some emotional identification retained with it and its residents. Stein was the first person to tell me that Harriet Tubman had had a white principal prior to the principalship of the black woman most residents believe to be the original principal and that Harriet Tubman had once had some white students. Also, he had some knowledge of landmarks in the neighborhood historically identified with blacks. Owners like Stein balance between identification with residents--often knowing whole families and chatting familiarly with customers about nephews and cousins--and aloofness from residents, signified in part by their lack of involvement with anything in the neighborhood that does not contribute to business viability. Unlike the blacks who work in the area and live elsewhere or who head institutions and live elsewhere, there is no sense of there being potential for greater neighborhood participation. No statements are made by whites lamenting their own lack of involvement or relating to the issue as one with foreseeable possibilities.

Oriental businesspersons are becoming rapidly more visible on the avenue. Attitudes about the newcomers are mixed. Some residents are resentful because they believe the U.S. government has favored new immigrants for business grants and/or loans in neglect of blacks who try to obtain assistance. Boycotts of businesses operated by the newcomers are mentioned privately as a possible means of retaliation but are not carried out in any recognizable way. Other residents believe that the appearance of the Orientals is a positive sign, particularly if the owners choose to live in the community and to send their children to the local schools.

Persons of the latter persuasion contend that mixed-ethnic neighborhoods are always healthier psychologically and more interesting than "ghetto" neighborhoods. Although the new businesspersons have joined the association, their residential preference at present is not the triangle or nearby neighborhoods.

RECREATION

During the summer months, sports leagues and teams provide competitive play for youngsters and adults. Although leagues and teams generally are affiliated with a recreational facility because of use of grounds and sometimes equipment, the impetus is carried through the desire of some one individual to coach a team or sponsor a league--one of the best-known leagues for youngsters in the area that includes the triangle as well as surrounding communities, is a prominent businessman/bar-club owner--or just to work with a group of children. The key individual is not usually on the payroll of a center but is perhaps someone who has frequented the grounds and developed an interest in spearheading an activity. An example is that of a young man who for several years spent vacations "hanging around" a certain recreational facility, talking with friends, drinking with the assembled regulars, or just relaxing on his own. After several summers he expressed a desire to coach a junior softball team and sought assistance on how to go about it from a peer who had, some years earlier, become coach for an older group of players through much the same process. The young man has coached the junior team for two summers.

A casual but regular activity such as that which occurs when teenagers play basketball on an available court, using either their own equipment or that borrowed from the center, may become organized if and when the participants decide they would like a coach so that they can sharpen their team sense and become competitive, either with similar groups in the neighborhood or from outside the neighborhood. Team names may be that of a street in the neighborhood from which players are drawn from the name of contributing business (uniforms and equipment) or the name of an individual.

The key individual is not necessarily a resident [illegible] the triangle;

in one instance, the individual is of another race and socio-economic background but has coached a team for several years.

The larger churches sponsor outside special days for church members and for neighborhood children and adults. Non-member children attend these affairs more frequently than non-member adults. Activities include organized games, music, and free play. In addition, church groups or groups supportive of a recreational facility may sponsor bazaars. One such bazaar featured a flea market, used clothes sale, sale of home-baked goods and used-book sale (books were children's books, several reference books and a host of popular-romance novels).

Trips (Atlantic City, New York, Williamsburg) are sponsored during the year by church clubs and others--e.g., the tenants' council of the government housing project. Trips may serve fund-raising purposes or serve simply to create recreational outlets for parties who are interested. One resident stated that she tried as often as she could to get away from the projects and that she had no sympathy for the young mothers who claimed they couldn't get the money together for a two-day trip to New York (hotel and a Broadway show included in the basic charge) on a chartered bus. She said, "I'm on welfare, too. All of us are in here (the projects)." Her means was to save $10.00 a month for a year so that she would have the funds for at least one trip, and she felt that her opportunities were thwarted because of others she weren't prepared financially for outings that required a group effort to become a reality. The woman who complained was of late middle years. Posted mimeographed notices of trips, usually to New York, Virginia, and Atlantic City ore often seen on trees or posts or storefronts or church bulletin boards. As another resident stated, trips serve the purpose of "getting people out of the neighborhood, giving them a chance to experience something different."

Discos are held for the young and old. One such disco, sponsored by the tenants' council, was held in the central-office facility and was attended by pre-teens, mostly girls, who danced the popular steps in formation, four girls squared, under the watchful eyes of mothers and siblings. Other discos are sponsored for teenagers by an interested volunteer through one of the recreation centers; teenagers dance out-of-doors to a stereo hook-up. Occasionally during the warmer months, live bands will be featured on a special day, perhaps a celebration of an African holiday, as sponsored by a recreational facility. Such occasions will draw youngsters and teens and young adults from all the communities that surround the triangle; their drawback is that they can spark fights and gang warfare, in seasons when gangs are active.

Block parties, fire-hydrant play and backyard cook-outs are other favored summer activities.

The one commercial recreational facility in the community, used primarily by children and teenagers, is a skating rink. The rink provides a focus of contention for parents who are wary of sending pre-teens to a place where "rough kids" are always "hanging around". Parents interviewed said that they never allowed children below teen years to go to the rink unless accompanied by themselves or older siblings and then infrequently.

Social service agencies, churches and recreation centers sponsor summer camps that provide outings for the children who attend--picnics and swimming parties routinely as well as visits to museums and places of interest in the city.

Play in the community differs from play in school in that the school restricts play that is not consistent with the values that the school upholds. One game that is not allowed on school grounds is "Mississippi", a line game (called "steps") played by children in the triangle of all ages through the early teens. "Mississippi" and games like it have a base of consistently sung phrases around which children improvise, sometimes with profanity or sexual references. It is not uncommon on fine days to see eight or ten children of varying ages engaged in a rousing performance of "steps" within yards of the gambling activities of older men congregated on a street corner or the porch of a vacant house.

The school otherwise does not monitor the play of children at recess, except to prevent fights and accidents.

Among the primary classes at Harriet Tubman, girls choose to play with girls as a rule and boys with boys. Girls jump rope and play hopscotch and play circle games. Boys play tug-of-war, ball games and "racing" one another. Boys also tease the girls by interfering with the rope games or throwing the ball among a circle of girls. Although they are not allowed to leave the schoolyard without permission, boys and girls (boys more frequently than girls) sometimes go to the store or visit favorite after-school play areas.

It is not possible to discuss with residents play and recreation among children without references arising to fights. The memory of fights, the imminent likelihood of fights, and the necessity of coping with fights in the future are constant refrains among adults and children. Movement of youngsters is restricted for reasons of safety (accidents, harassment by older children and sometimes adults) and to prevent the occurrence of fights. Children themselves choose to play where they will be less likely to have to battle others. According to one fourth grader, a high-achieving student, who was conscientious about her record in school, regarding grades as well as her behavior, "My mother didn't want me to fight, my father didn't want me to fight, my grandmother didn't want me to fight, and I didn't want to fight, but I had to fight." In effect, fighting and --more so--communication to others of the readiness to fight is essential to establishing conditions for play--i.e., to having others "leave (one) alone."

EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION

There are official and unofficial cooperative arrangements between educational institutions within the community. Official arrangements are those mandated for public schools by the board of education. These include shared personnel, space, services and activities in such programs as Follow-Through, Books for Tots, and special services for the academically talented, handicapped and learning disabled children.

Unofficial arrangements are those created through voluntary action of the parties concerned. The unofficial arrangements take place most noticeably between after-school and pre-school programs and the public schools in the area. In one instance, parents of children in a pre-school program voted to send their children to a public school just outside the triangle in preference to Harriet Tubman, and the tradition has maintained itself for no apparent reason than that the initial contacts made between personnel of the two institutions have tended to prove ongoing. The original choice was made, according to a spokesperson, for reasons not specifically educational--i.e., newness of the other building, existence of an escort service. In another instance, 80% of project children in an after-school program attend Harriet Tubman, and the communication among parents of the two institutions as well as personnel who have become acquainted with both institutions has tended to stabilize the population of the after-school program in its identification with Harriet Tubman.

One most interesting example of cooperation is that maintained between a parent-cooperative pre-school program and one particular kindergarten teacher at Harriot Tubman. In this instance, the pre-school teacher consulted independently with one of the kindergarten teachers with a reputation for being academically oriented--that is, emphasizing "work" rather than "play". The pre-school teacher was in the process of setting up a program in a recreation center close by Harriet Tubman, one which would draw its children primarily from the triangle. Her concern was that she teach children the kinds of skills they would need to be prepared for entering the "top" kindergartenclass at Harriet Tubman. Understandably then, children graduating from the pre-school program were taken first by their parents to the particular kindergarten teacher for consideration on recommendation of the pre-school teacher. Whereas, in previous years 95% of the youngsters graduating from the pre-school program entered Harriet Tubman (if not always the preferred class), the number has dropped in the last year to a lesser percentage, roughly 60%, due to (1) migration of parents to other parts of the city with continued enrollment of siblings and (2) enrollment of children from outside the area because of word-of-mouth reputation of the program through parents and workers.

In that particular program, parents are responsible totally for costs of food, supplies, equipment and salaries. The center provides space. The program has never had more than one teacher, who instructs an average of 25 children with volunteer assistance from parents and interested residents.

Pre-school programs in the area tend to favor one public school or the other. One learns that children from A school "go to" Harriet Tubman rather than the nearest public, elementary school outside the triangle, and children from B school to the latter.

With the exception of examples noted, the sharing of educational resources among community institutions relies upon individual initiative of parents, who may choose, for instance, to enroll a child in a "Y" class or perhaps a class at one of the recreation centers, and depends on the initiative of the children themselves who may encounter a learning situation accidentally--i.e., "wander into" a class or attend with a friend and choose to remain.

CIVIC COOPERATION AND LEADERSHIP

Complaints are numerous about the lack of cooperation among residents for purpose of neighborhood improvement. Rather than forming a cooperative network, public and private institutions tend to be beachheads in themselves. Personnel may be unaware of or distrustful of the motivations and services of personnel in nearby institutions and agencies. There is much concern in every facet of community life about whether or not leadership is "ripping off" (exploiting) the people, financially or psychologically. These concerns, when pursued verbally, tend to be shadowy in their substantiation. When told of neighborhood efforts to revive an old civic organization, one agency head complained, "If (the organizers) were sincere, they would just come in under our organization. We're trying to do already what they're proposing to do. Why don't they help us instead of trying to start something new?"

The usual organizational pattern--a pattern which cuts across civic, educational, business, recreational and religious considerations--features a somewhat self-willed leader at the top of the hierarchy whose philosophy and strategies for action determine the accessibility of the organization to participants and to those who would care to participate. The viability of the organization or institution is dependent upon whether or not that individual in his or her personal philosophy and methods, reflects the vlaues, formulated or unformulated, of a substantial number of constituents. If the leader runs counter to the will of the rank and file, it is more likely that the dissidents will remove themselves and retreat into inactivity, leaving the old organization officially intact but ineffectual;

pursue non-organizational means of accomplishing the goal; or set up an alternative structure similar to the old but with more compatible leadership, than it is likely that the old leadership will be replaced and the organization become revived along reformed lines.

An exception to the pattern seems to be that represented by a block organization that decided to do something to develop a city-owned vacant lot. Although, by the informant's account, the organization had potential for falling within the least effective expression of the pattern noted above, consensus within the body was sufficient to "get things done" by a less ordered but more representative process that at times involved verbal confrontations, compromises and eventual agreement.

A key factor within the organizational/institutional process of achieving action is that of confrontation. In fact, the issue of confrontation--when it will happen, if it will happen, when it has happened previously--is one that permeates community life.

In the example of the block organization, the eventual result was the development of the vacant lots into plots of garden land for growing vegetables, a cooperative arrangement that involved block residents as well as the solicited aid of a city gardening advisory agency. It can be speculated that the reason it was possible for confrontations to be aired and then worked through was the limited number of individuals involved (never more than representatives of two blocks) as well as their long acquaintanceship and interdependence.

In the example of the gardening cooperative and one other, a baseball league for men, verbal confrontation has been the rule in the planning and carrying out of the purposes of the organization. Again, with the league, the issue of procedure--anxiety that meetings be conducted and strategies undertaken in a manner that is "correct"; i.e., by the book, whether parliamentary or rule book or perception of some individual(s) of the proper way of accomplishing a task--is a dominant theme. (In the instance of the gardening cooperative, the informant stated that the director was over-concerned about "rules and procedure" but that "we were able to get around that.") Confrontation as a necessity--the working out of varying points of view--is ever in conflict with concern about procedure.

Constituents' perception as to whether "things get done" or do not "get done", is tied to their perception of leadership and its relation to confrontation. At Harriet Tubman, teachers and parents believe that the job of education is able to proceed with some efficiency because the principal controls confrontation (student to student, parent to school, teacher to teacher, teacher to administration) although there is recognition in some places--noticeably among individuals who would like to see more artistic expression reflected in the curriculum and more educational experimentation--that preoccupation with order can be restrictive (things not getting done).

"They don't want (are not going to "let") anybody in there who doesn't see things the way they see them," is a much-repeated statement. People respond quickly to cues that would shut them out, anticipate such cues, at times will not go towards a situation because they have decided beforehand what the outcome will be. On the other hand, leadership is wary of dissidents, or people who would "tear down" what they have built or tried to build or are trying to build.

Residents expect effective leaders to be "strong"--that is, to be able to prevent confrontation from becoming disruptive--and at the same time, they want to be able to voice their opinions and have their grievances addressed. They look to ordered procedure as a means of achieving both goals.

In the example of the baseball league, actual meetings are likely to be boisterous--members speaking at the same time, even shouting--and complaints are heard that "nothing ever gets done." The observable growth of the league, which has doubled its participation over the period of the two years this study has been in progress, and its apparent stability in the face of diversity (professionals, ex-convicts, blue and white-collar workers) is evidence that much does, in fact, get accomplished.

Whereas most organizations in the triangle and on its borders can be identified with a personality: residents say, "Oh, the (name of organization) --that's (name of personality)", or search their minds to come up with a name, the league is an exception; the organizer perceives his role as being that of a catalyst.

The case study which follows demonstrates aspects of leadership controversy within the triangle.

CASE STUDY: A CIVIC ORGANIZATION

I had made a habit early in the observations of asking residents whether there was a civic organization representing the triangle. Although I was at the time interviewing key individuals from the business, recreational and religious communities, no one had heard of any such group. The first mention of a civic organization was made by an elderly pastor, who told me he and a few residents had organized and incorporated a body some years earlier and that the purpose of that body was to find monies for rehabilitating properties. He told me that the organization represented the triangle exclusively. When I expressed surprise that no one else had called attention to the organization, the pastor explained that little had been done in the last few years and that the group had fallen into inactivity following submission of a proposal to the city--a proposal on which no action had been taken. He made no secret of the fact that a block had been selected for rehabilitation that was located in close proximity to the church. He complained that it was difficult to maintain the interest of residents, that people would come to a few meetings, then would not be heard from again.

Subsequently I met a resident of one of the better-kept blocks in the triangle--a Mrs. R--who expressed to me, in the casual context of her front porch, that she had done all she felt she could do to help her less fortunate neighbors ("neighbors" meant for her at the time those families on her block and adjacent blocks whose children frequented her own block for play or were visible in other respects). She said she had tried to raise the consciousness of individuals--children, in particular, whom she had taken into her home and tried to teach manners and certain skills--but had been met only with ingratitude. Her position was that she had "written off" the idea that people in the neighborhood could be helped. She was speaking in particular of those who were unable for whatever reasons to maintain their properties and control their children in a manner consistent with her own values, which stressed respect for property, moral uprightness and financial responsibility.

It was evident that she was speaking primarily about a three-block area, and I expressed that perhaps it was necessary that a larger territory, such as that of the triangle, organize itself for action regarding housing, uses of property, residential control and similar matters. I expressed that perhaps, acting alone or with just a few neighbors, she couldn't command sufficient clout to have an impact upon the actions of individuals whose lifestyles she considered undesirable. I asked if she had heard about the civic organization, and she said she hadn't. Her general tone throughout the conversation was one of pessimism. She expressed that she had tried "everything" and that nothing was possible--that there were those who just didn't want anything for themselves and would try to prevent others from having anything.

Mrs. R. and her husband were professionals who had bought a home at small cost a few years earlier and had rehabilitated it themselves. They represented "faith" in the neighborhood and were one family of a small number of young persons who had decided to stake a claim in the neighborhood with hopes it would "go up" on its own or that they could, employing youthful energies and idealism, cause it to go up. Because neighborhood meant to them at the time of our conversation primarily what they might encounter through sight and sound from the vantage point of their own front porch, they had concentrated their energies upon their own block and one other which was equally well-kept. The R's related to the have-nots and to those who appeared not to have the same values as their own, with missionary sensitivity at best. Having decided conversion was not a possibility, they were concerned about containing the advance of persons considered morally suspect.

Similarly, the F's are a young couple who have purchased a house in the triangle. Mr. F. attended Harriet Tubman and has lived in the general neighborhood all his life. They have several children, all of whom attend Harriet Tubman (the children of the R's attend a private school). The F's, like the D's, are wagering on the neighborhood's improvement. Their own lifestyle spans values that would be abhorrent to the R's at certain points and most acceptable at others. Whereas on the surface the two couples appear similar--they are about the same age, appear to be middle-income, and have attained bachelor's degrees--the F's are streetwise and maintain contacts with a broad range of individuals of varying lifestyles and financial solvency.

The R's and the F's represented an energetic faction within the community who realized that the neighborhood could go "either way" and were eager to have some impact upon its future. They and others of their persuasion, unaware of the older civic organization, made steps to create their own body. At the initial meeting, a representative of the older group let the newcomers know that an organization already existed and that strategically it would be unwise to have two groups represent the triangle. Consequently, the newcomers began attending meetings of the older group.

From the beginning, it was clear in the combined meetings that the newcomers had a different agenda, or broader one, than the old group. The newcomers were interested in youth education, general beautification of the area, reclaiming of vacant lots for recreational purposes, and services to the aged, whereas the older group seemed to concentrate primarily on the rehabilitation of vacant homes for resale. The older group was most concerned about the fate of its proposal for rehabilitation of houses, and the new individuals were considerably miffed that they ahd not been allowed to see the original proposal and that no one intended to permit them to do so. Considerable tension had been built around the initial meetings of the two factions, old and new. Although the meetings themselves were conducted with decorum and politeness on every side, there had been much speculation privately as to the outcome.

An additional factor in the triangle is the number of men, ranging in age from late teens to fifties, who are out of work and have time on their hands. Many have prison records or at the least police records. Others have difficulty getting and keeping jobs because their skills are poor or because they have drug and alcohol habits that interfere with employment stability. Some have laborer's jobs and spend the off hours in the bars or in companionship at selected spots with others who have time on their hands.

Most have long-time ties with the community--broader community of which the triangle is part--through their own upbringing or that of close relatives. The majority have old gang ties, the memory of which is most alive to them. The comings and goings of these men involve a subculture or its own. They know one another and one another's families, frequent the neighborhood bars and clubs, participate in gambling activities, and retain a strong interest in anything that affects the area. Their loyalty has a chauvinistic quality. They are the ones who will talk on and on all evening, with little or no prodding, about who used to live where, what was once located where and who frequented it, who went to school where, and why one thing happened to change the neighborhood as opposed to something else. They will tell you about the fights they engaged in as youngsters with the Italian youth or the Irish youth and how, relegated to the balcony of the local movie theater, they used to throw candy wrappers down on the heads of the white people on the main floor, while the residents with solider family economic roots will speak of the harmony that existed between the races in the thirties and forties and how no distinctions were made based on race. This group of men make up a large part of what the R's would refer to as the ones--with their families often--who don't want anything and would prevent the progress of others.

There was much talk among those of the street men who knew about the meetings through word of mouth, of the prospects for something good to come of them. The consensus was that there were certain individuals who had their own interests at heart--getting personal financial gain out of the rehabilitation of properties--and who would keep tight control of whatever power was to be had or advantage. Certainly the others weren't going to let anybody in who wasn't of their persuasion (religious, economic, social) or wasn't in their circle. "This is supposed to be an open meeting that's going to help the whole community, but they don't want us to come. They're going to do everything in their power to keep us out. They don't want to hear what we have to say." Implied in such statements was that the speakers were the ones with the truth in hand, the ones who really knew what was going on in the neighborhood, and the ones whose motivations were aboveboard--the ones "for the people."

The conversations prior to the meetings pointed toward some form of showdown or at least a heated debate. As it happened, the street dissidents never showed up, and the new group/old group factions bogged themselves down in discussions of agenda-priorities to the extent that the major issues never reached the floor. The meetings were moved from the more neutral territory of a gym to a church basement, and no notice was posted to the effect at the old meeting site. Printed notices evidently had been sent out "all around", although nobody who wasn't a member in some standing appeared to have had access to one. I never saw a single notice posted around the neighborhood for casual perusal.

Subsequent meetings were held in the church basement, always with the sounds of choir practice or other religious meeting above, an atmosphere which lent its own form of control to the direction activities and discussions were likely to take in the basement. It was true also that the non-church elements, amoung whose numbers were potentially the most vociferous dissidents, were more likely to show up on neutral ground than in the church. Regardless, the move from gym to chruch marked the beginning of the end of participation of the new group. In its last appearance, on of its representatives read a statement which was politely worded except to say that the concerns of certain persons were not being taken into account. The authors of the statement then made some attempts to start an alternative organization, as they had tried initially, but the venture never got off the ground. It is worthwhile noting that a major reason the new organization never materialized was that nobody among its potential leadership wanted to go out "on front street"--that is, to expose themselves and their lifestyle to the kind of visibility that would be called for, expecially considering that they would be acting in opposition to the established body and making themselves vulnerable to accusation and investigation.

Although much dissatisfaction was expressed, not only among the new dissidents, but among those who were long-time supporters of the old organization, of the way meetings were being conducted, this dissension was never aired in the meetings themselves. The meetings were always brief, dull (in the judgment of residents) and nonproductive. Dissent, when it was heard, was couched in such polite phrases and/or apologies that it could easily be ignored. In one instance, an elderly man who had been prominent in both school and community activities over many years mumbled privately that the president was pursuing an issue that no one was interested in. When he finally spoke out, his tone was respectful and apologetic: "I'm not bringing this up to create problems, and I don't know whether others feel the way I do, but I think we should take a vote on ________. Now, if my suggestion isn't worthwhile, just throw it out, but...." There were some stirrings among the members, and, assuming the stirrings meant disagreement, the gentleman added, "Well, if nobody else feels that way...well, just forget it." And the matter of a vote was ignored although several others had given reasons during the course of the meeting that the matter was unworkable and no one had expressed enthusiasm for it.

Meetings were always dominated by one or two individuals who, although they were genuinely didicated to the building of a strong civic organization, prevented the kind of participation from others that would make the dream a reality. The motivating factors in the heavy-handedness, my observations led me to believe, were not so much greed and/or hunger for power as fear of loss of control, fear of disruption, fear of energies that would eat away at, tear down, even the degree of cooperative action that had been achieved. The forces of destruction were always assumed to be at the door.

The fact is that for a while new life had been generated in the organization, after a period of six or seven years that, by the pastor-organizer's own admission, had been unpromising. The retreat of the new group signalled a retreat also by residents who were not outspoken but were privately in favor of a broader base of activity and who had begun attending meetings again only because the new group had given them hopes that the organization might become effective.

The factions who took interest in the revival of the civic organization can be described from several perspectives. The individuals who would not relinquish authoritative positions represent the old guard; they are churchgoers whose average age is some 20 or more years in advance of the other factions. They have lived in the neighborhood all or most of their lives, and they have seen movements come and movements go. Their attitude is protective, and they are most wary of destructive forces form within. They are knowing, and their cynicism in its way is an easy match of any displayed by the street people.

Their living is earned through traditional professions--as teachers, preachers, social service workers and health care workers--and their assumption of leadership roles is justified by years of responsible residency. Their way is to work within the system and to appeal to it when grievances are felt (police, city management, service agencies) while they maintain considerable skepticism that those avenues of appeal will resond appropriately. Although the major elected representative of the area was invited to assist the process of making the proposal a live issue with city government, and although he was leaned upon for the sake of the means at his disposal, his presentation was met with by silent jeers--eye rolling, significant glances from one person to the other, and veiled smirking.

The old guard are stuck with the neighborhood for better or for worse--this is a matter both of genuine commitment and expediency--whereas the R's and the F's, and those like them, have other options. In fact, the R's, in light of the failure of the civic group and some close-to-home experiences of the advance of civic blight, have recently moved out of the neighborhood and into the suburbs. The F's have gone "underground"--that is, they have decided to pursue development of their own goals, making contacts on an individual basis within the neighborhood and avoiding group involvement.

The R's and the F's could be considered radicals because they were aggressive enough to create waves, to the extent of making preliminary steps toward formation of an alternative civic organization, which, if chartered, would supplant the other. The fact is that they preferred to work within a structure already established. The less vocal dissidents, who privately hoped the newcomers would succeed in altering the nature of the old organization, have retreated again into the posture originally represented by the R's, that of concentration upon their own block--there are at least two strong block organizations in the triangle--or participation in a more broadly based organization that would represent not only the triangle but two adjoining communities.

The other fixed-position group (in addition to the old guard) is that of the street people. They are the visible manifestation of the loss of control feared by everyone else--the wolf at the door from within the compound--the one element within the community who have no fear of a loss of control (their fear is more a fear of loss of turf or homeland). The control that must be maintained, from the perspective of this latter group, is that of privacy. They want to be left alone because they believe they are the ones being ripped off. Their lifestyle in their own view has spirituality and commitment. They see themselves as being protectors of a different kind of tradition, one less contaminated and more culturally pure.

As of this writing, the civic organization seems to have returned to its former state, its productivity bogged down in the issue of the old proposal and uncertainty as to the responsiveness of a new city administration.

When asked why a few persons were allowed to dominate the organization, one resident answered, "Nobody wants to hurt the president's feelings or create problems for him; he's been around for a long time, and he means well."

II. INTERLOCKING PROFILES

PREFACE

The observer undertook the following interlocking profiles to trace interactions among individuals whose lives touch because of some relation to the school and/or community. It is hoped that the profiles or "networks" of interaction illuminate features of the school-community-home experience that might go unremarked otherwise. The profiles are not intended to provide comprehensive information about the individuals in their relation to any aspect of their lives or to one another. Rather, they represent the observer's experience of the individuals in the contexts noted over a period of several months. The pattern of the observations was initial concentration on the subject, lasting from a few days to no more than a week's time, followed by periodic re-establishment of contact over the period of months. As a result, contact was both planned and incidental.

MRS. PORTER, SARA, MRS MERCER

Mrs. Porter is a divorced woman in her early thirties. She has been living in the government housing project for a year and is a welfare recipient. She has several children who do not live with her and two who do. She resides in a two-bedroom apartment on an upper floor in one of the high-rises, considered by residents to be the least desirable of the housing units, competing unfavorably with the single-unit, row house dwellings that surround the taller buildings. She states, as do other parents I interviewed in the high-rise, that she has put in an application to be transferred to a house (one of the low-rise units) but that no action has been taken. She complains, as do other parents, that it seems one needs "connections" in order to be transferred.

The apartment itself is sparsely furnished. The general impression is one of lack of material comforts, although there is a stereo set and a television as well as a set of encyclopedia, in this instance, Encyclopedia Brittanica. There are also magazines: Good Housekeeping, Sports Illustrated, Newsweek, and Psychology Today. Mrs. Porter apologizes for her housekeeping. Over the telephone when we are setting up times for visits and when I enter the apartment, she mentions the housekeeping--that she is having difficulty getting to it, that she is going to spend all day the next day on it, and the like. The laundry is often mentioned in the same way. She seems burdened in the early visits by necessities that she wants to deal with and just doesn't seem to get to; the impression becomes noteworthy in light of later developments.

She is burdened also by the fact that she has enrolled in two courses at the local extension of the community college--courses in accounting and in Spanish--and has not attended for several sessions; she wonders if she will be able to catch up. Mrs. Porter is talkative and appears open but distracted. She wants to become involved politically in the neighborhood and mentions that in the recent election, she had to go to some lengths to find out how to place her ballot when the voting machine broke down in her district. She knows the names of the local party officials and representatives. She has already hosted a meeting of parents of Harriet Tubman--parents who reside in the high rise--and is disappointed that the school representative did not take steps to encourage further meetings.

Mrs. Porter works part-time as a parent-scholar in one of the classrooms at Harriet Tubman. She states that she enjoys learning and re-learning with the children. She wants her children to get a good education and believes she will find a way to make that wish a reality. The words and the mannerisms project vitality of mind and spirit. Mrs. Porter seems to be a doer, even possibly an activist. There is for the observer an impression of dissonance in experiencing the woman against the background of the room, with its "functional" starkness--its cinderblock walls and drab paint and dark tile floors. Mrs. Porter's smile is bright but distant. She does not, for all her talkativeness and apparent confidences, appear to be an easy person to get to know.

Sara, the kindergartener, is an energetic child at home. Also, she likes doing her homework and never has to be forced to do it. In particular, she likes "writing"--printing letters of the alphabet. On one occasion, after having read a story book aloud to me--a performance that was half word-recognition and half memorization--she painstakingly copies the information on the book's cover, then picks up an empty raisins box from the table and copies everything on the box. It is evident that she likes the "performance" aspects of copying, and then presenting the product for comments. In my first experience of Sara, she is seated on the floor in front of the television, which she is ignoring for the moment, and is printing letters randomly remembered from her school work. Typically, Sara's range of activity in any afternoon can be broad, considering the confinement of the apartment. She may choose to read one moment, skate across the tile floor the next--on real skates--and then use the back of a stuffed reclining chair as a sliding board. Or again, she may turn on the record player and dance, mimicking the steps popular among older children.

Sara's reading and writing activities at present are closely related to her need to be noticed and praised. She wants me to put a star on her paper to indicate I have liked what she has written and insists that the star cover the face of the paper, to the extent of being what I feel is a defacement of the work. Mrs. Porter says that her daughter often asks after doing her homework, "Do you think Mrs. Mercer will like it? Do you think she'll be pleased?"

The performance aspect of Sara's reading and writing skills is encouraged by her mother. In a casual taping session with Sara and neighbor-children, in which the children are being "interviewed" by me and otherwise saying whatever they want, Mrs. Porter says, "Sara, go get your book and read it into the machine." Sara brings in the same book, half-memorized, that she has read aloud for me on a previous occasion. Another child, who is telling a story at the time is interrupted. Sara reads, while the other children, as well as the three adults in the room, listen. Whenever the other children try to interject comments about the book or anything else, they are quieted by the adults although the reading takes as long as ten minutes. Then, Sara wants everybody to be quiet again while the tape plays back the full reading. At one point she covers her ears with her hands and tries to shut everybody else out. A neighbor-child (in whose parents' apartment the taping has occurred) Sara's age picks up the book and begins "reading" the pictures. Sara angrily tries to take the book away, saying several times, "She can't even read." Mrs. Porter asks that they not tear the book, then asks the neighbor-child, "Don't you have a book like this?" to which the response is a shake of the head. The book is one Mrs. Porter has gotten through a free service at the school.

Later, Sara performs an impromptu dance to a popular tune while the adults and other children watch. Mrs. Porter laughs appreciatively.

Sara is encouraged to talk. She often interrupts the conversations of adults to tell about something on T.V. or ask a question or make a comment, sometimes prefacing her request or statement with the words, "Excuse me." Mrs. Porter listens with apparent interest until the matter is expressed and then responds in some way, either through smiling or laughter, if appropriate, or a comment. If the interrruptions become frequent, she will say, "Now go look at T.V. or read your book while I talk to ________."

At home Sara will pick up adult reading materials, an encyclopedia volume or an advertisement or one of her brother's sports magazines and try to read them, fastening on words here and there she recognizes.

I learn first from Mrs. Porter that Sara is "bright". She says of her daughter: "Sara knows I expect her to bring home good grades." On one occasion, when I say that I wish I could see Sara five or six years hence, Mrs. Porter says, "It really would be interesting to follow one child a number of years--one gifted child." Then she mentions, as example, an article in Psychology Today about the Terman study of gifted children. Mrs. Porter also states that pediatricians and psychiatrists who write about children often use their own children as subjects. Whatever the reason for the comments, it is clear that she considers her own daughter gifted and has interpreted my comment in that light although I was expressing interest in a more generalized fashion in the shaping of Sara as a person.

Sara did not have regular bedtime hours. She would at times stay up late playing music--according to her mother, brother and friends--if the adults were also up; and on two occasions when I picked her up for school, she was obviously still in need of sleep. Because of lateness, on those days she went to school without breakfast or with a limited breakfast--i.e., a piece of fruit.

At home, Sara was not timid in the company of adults--her mother or others. She might ask "Why?" when told by her mother to do something she didn't want to do. In the neighbor's apartment, she went into a back room and came out, to the neighbor's dismay, with a towel from the fresh laundry wrapped around her body. On my second visit, she said to me, "You came here to see how we live."

The Sara I encountered in her home was aggressive, talkative, confident, and a bit flamboyant.

I was, therefore, unprepared for the teacher's and assistant's comments that Sara's problem was that she was "babyish" and "immature". Certainly I had seen prankishness, but the descriptions didn't sound like the child who had insisted one afternoon on leading me several blocks through the neighborhood to find her mother who, Sara was convinced, was at the laundramat.

The following notes illustrate what was typically Sara's experience in class:

> The assistant teacher asks Sara to bring her workbook to the table to be checked. That done, Sara is told to put the book away. Sara takes the wrong "route" to the storage shelf, and Mrs. Mercer (the teacher) calls her back, tells another child to show her the right route to take. Mrs. Mercer says, "After seven months of kindergarten--" and shakes her head. "You may be mommy's baby, but you're not my baby. Take your finger out of your mouth."
>
> At circle time, the children are volunteering to give the full name of one other child in the classroom. Sara volunteers and stands up but doesn't give the full name. Mrs. Mercer has to ask her several times to "speak up".
>
> Sara is called upon to read, and she begins reading in the wrong place. Joyce, the child seated next to her, tries to help, but Mrs. Mercer says, "Don't show her. She should be paying attention." Joyce draws her hand away. Another

> child is called upon; then Mrs. Mercer calls on Sara again. Sara still hasn't found the right place on the page. Joyce tries again to help and is caught the second time. Joyce tries once more, but Sara doesn't get it right. Finally, Joyce has to indicate the right place with Mrs. Mercer's permission. The reading done, children are asked to open their homework books. Sara begins turning pages at the front of her book. Mrs. Mercer says, "Sara, that's the silly way to do it; we're at the back of the book." Joyce tries to show Sara where to turn. Sara still can't find the right page. Joyce shakes her head solicitously and smiles. She shows Sara again. When called upon, Sara does not know the answer.
>
> Sara is attentive during library story hour but not overtly responsive; she does not laugh or smile. Back in class, she is last to open her workbook and write her name on the page. She yawns frequently. When she finishes the page, she waits rather than going on to the next page--seems to be waiting for instructions, although instructions have been given. She gets up to go blow her nose and returns to the wrong seat. Boy says angrily, "That's my seat." She gets up and goes to her seat, says softly, "I'm sorry," and yawns.
>
> She waits in line to have her workbook checked; she has not torn the pages out of the workbook, as Mrs. Mercer has instructed. When it's her turn, Sara is told to go back and tear the pages out. She does not approach the creasing and tearing process correctly (Mrs. Mercer has previously told the children how to go about it) and therefore cannot tear the pages out. Frustrated, she puts thumb in her mouth and holds her ear. Suddenly she yanks the pages hard, and they come out. She receives three dots for her work. Mrs. Mercer says, "This is good, but you should have gotten four dots (the maximum)."

Mrs. Mercer says that Sara doesn't pay attention, that Sara wants to do just what she wants to do. She says that it will be a "liability if Sara gets a teacher (in first grade) who treats her as if she's cute. She *is* cute, but I would never let her know."

The accounts given above might suggest that Sara does below-average work. However, the opposite is the case. The children in Mrs. Mercer's class are grouped homogenously, according to the level of work done in class, considered in conjunciton with standardized test scores, and Sara is in the top-performance group. In spite of the fact that Sara was often late to class or absent (19 times in one semester), she scored consistently in the top five per cent of the class on exams--teacher made as well as standardized. "She's so bright," Mrs. Mercer says, "it's a shame she's late and absent so much."

In general, Sara's behavior in class is subdued, carefully polite, and at times distracted. She watches what other children are doing. On one occasion, when Sara had made "100" on a teacher-made exam in spite of having been absent three days in the previous week, the teacher said, "Sara is all right as long as she is working by herself. If other children are present, she is so busy looking at them, she can't do her own work."

I did observe Sara trying to shut other children out. On one occasion, she was annoyed with other children at the table who were counting aloud during a math exercise. She said repeatedly, "Don't count out loud," frowned angrily and wouldn't work. Finally, she asked the assistant for dividers (two pieces of cardboard fashioned to stand on end to form a makeshift study carrel). The assistant moved her to an individual seat. On another occasion, she was late getting started with her reading exercise because she had spent excessive time adjusting her "carrel" so that she would have as much privacy as possible. As in the example above, she might start out at the table with other children and then have to be moved to an individual seat, for reasons that were work-related and not disciplinary.

At odd moments, I glimpsed the personality I had seen at home. Sara sometimes "danced" at her seat while she was waiting for her work to be checked or at other moments in-between activities. The dancing consisted mainly of movements from the waist up--swaying and finger-popping motions. At times she would skip to the bathroom and back.

It was apparent to me that Sara's babyishness and ineptness were often just sleepiness, a possibility that the teacher was sensitive to, although she had no way of appreciating to what extent the likelihood existed. On one occasion, Mrs. Mercer shook her finger, not unkindly, at Sara. "You need to go to bed early, so you won't be tired in the morning."

Mrs. Mercer says to Sara, "I wish mother would spend a day in the classroom; then mother would know what I mean." At the moment, Sara is attempting to find the proper shelf on which to place her finished work, a task Mrs. Mercer feels could have been simply accomplished if Sara had been "paying attention".

Sara's mother says, in speaking about the classroom, "I can't bear to stand there and watch. Mrs. Mercer gives Sara such a hard time. It's all I can do to keep from interfering." The comment is not made in relation to any prompting on my part, and significantly, Mrs. Porter is smiling as she speaks. She has deferred to Mrs. Mercer's judgment in the matter, and she speaks again of how "hard Sara tries" to please the teacher.

Mrs. Mercer admits readily that she wears a stern, unsmiling face much of the time. The reason, she says, is that she doesn't want the children to feel they can "get away" with behavior that disrupts classroom proceedings, and she wants to keep their minds focused in seriousness. Mrs. Mercer believes that the purpose of kindergarten is to prepare children academically for first grade; the purpose is not "play".

In her orientation for parents of children who are entering her kindergarten class, Mrs. Mercer stresses that she emphasizes language and comprehension in her teaching--and she defines comprehension for the parents as "thinking". On two days of the week, for ____each day, Mrs. Mercer's kindergarteners have arts and crafts. The heart of each day of the week, however, barring trip days, is devoted to reading, writing and arithmetic in some form. The classroom is ordered in such a say that all the materials children use--workbooks, cut-out letters, games, etc.--have a storage place which children must learn to honor. For example, in the mornings children take turns in "writing" on the flannel board, using letters that are kept in alphabetical stacks in a box. The letters must be returned to the stacks in such a way that every letter fits exactly over its counterparts, so that the letters will be immediately recognizable. In that way, children receive visual reinforcement of alphabetical sequence each time they open the box. Regardless as to how long it takes a child to put the letters away so that every "a", for instance, fits perfectly over every other "a"--the stems all turned in the same direction--Mrs. Mercer will insist that the job not be abandoned until it is completed correctly, even if the other children have begun another activity. In the same vein, the children are taught to use certain "routes" through the classroom to get from one point to the other--trash can, bathroom, etc.--and they will be stopped and made to return to the original point to start all over again when the proper route has been ignored. The routes have all been pre-determined by Mrs. Mercer for obtaining maximum efficiency of movement of children about the classroom, so that they are least likely to interfere with the activities of others. These examples are pointed out to illustrate the tone of the classroom; the same concern for exactness and order and for efficiency of use of time is evidenced in every activity of the day whether children are removing their coats in the morning or preparing for lunch or engaging in an academic exercise. A lesson that occurred one morning following a trip the students had taken earlier in the week to the zoo, illustrates the latter:

Before the class started, Mrs. Mercer had placed the names of zoo animals at the back of the classroom, on the wall. She did not call attention to those words while the children were engaged in playing seat games (puzzles, constructions, and the like), always the first activity of the day; but at circle time, she asked the children to tell her, without looking around, what was new at the back of the classroom. Then, again without looking back at the wall, children were asked to identify from memory animals they had seen at the zoo; the child who raised his or her hand to answer could not name an animal another child had already named. If a child said, "lion", then he or she had to go to the back of the classroom, study the word, then return and spell it correctly on a large pad set up in front of the circle so that everyone could see. If the child misspelled the word, he or she had to return to the wall, study it again, and re-attempt the spelling. Of course, "elephant" and "monkey" presented greater problems than "lion" and "tiger". And children who were not swift in raising their hads were left to remember animals least easily recalled. The rules were followed to the letter, however, although several children had to return again and again to the wall while the exercise was continuing with the other children. Such an activity, which, if pursued to the extent that every child had a turn, would potentially consume much of th day, might be cut short by scheduling (time for lunch, time for group work, etc.) although children who had begun the process--i.e., named an animal no one else had named and then gone to the wall to study the spelling--had to complete the assignment either then or at some stated time before the day was over (as "before lunch").

Mrs. Mercer readily points out, whether to child or to observer or parent, that she is teaching survival skills for "first grade"--interpreted generously to include all the children's academic careers--as well as reading, writing and arithmetic. Those skills include the ability to follow directions and to concentrate on a task to its completion as well as the ability to be observant of and attentive to whatever the teacher presents. She says repeatedly to the children, "I don't know what you're going to do in first grade. In first grade, the teacher isn't going to tell you but once, and if you're not listening, you'll be in trouble."

The classroom is ordered so that children work in groups during the hour or more devoted to the heaviest concentration of basics development. The three groups, representing children's performance on tests (teacher-made and standardized) rotate--i.e., while group one is reading, group two is writing, and group three is doing math. At a set time, the groups change places in the classroom. During the time of my observations, Mrs. Mercer always conducted the reading lessons, whereas classroom assistants conducted writing and math for the groups. Circle times are scheduled after group time and before lunch, an arrangement which allows children to leave their group work at staggered paces and to have some station immediately to go to; the strategy minimizes the amount of time children spend that is undefined for them.

A product of a black, middle-class background, Mrs. Mercer attended predominantly white public schools as a child (her parents sent her across school boundaries, having argued successfully that if a white child of their neighborhood could do so, then their child was eligible), then matriculated at the state university. She was an achiever in school, and her parents had expectations of her teaching in some school, white or integrated, far removed from the type of school that Harriet Tubman--which serves the children of low-income black families--is. Mrs. Mercer taught in a suburban school her first years out of college, then transferred into the city and to Harriet Tubman, which was one of two assignments, both in schools with black populations, offered her. She selected Harriet Tubman because she knew someone who had attended there and who recommended it as the better choice.

Mrs. Mercer admits that she "fell in love" with the children she had been warned to avoid. She found them attractive and bright and eager to learn, as much so as children she had encountered in the suburban setting. She says she asked herself why the children in her classroom at Harriet Tubman shouldn't receive as good instruction as children of families more privileged economically. Then she committed herself to providing what she believed to be quality instruction for her pupils; quality instruction, as she understood it, meant academic challenge in reading, writing and arithmetic. As a consequence, in her classroom, Mrs. Mercer disallows the kind of atmosphere that would make school "fun" for children--extension of the play life of the earlier years--carrying what she would consider to be minimal responsibilities and providing entertaining distractions through a curriculum stressing games, sand play, constructions, arts and crafts, and the like. She tells the parents and she tells the children and she tells whoever else is interested that her instructional style is chosen deliberately to keep the children focused upon the work at hand, which is to learn "as much as they can" of the basics while they're in kindergarten. "I can't do anything about what happens when they leave my classroom (graduate from kindergarten and encounter other teachers), but I can see to it that they've had a good foundation," says Mrs. Mercer.

Her teaching style is traditional. Children are discouraged from talking to one another or assisting one another in their work (unless requested to do so by the teacher). They are expected to sit up straight whether at their desks or at circle time. There is no "free play" as such scheduled for any time of day. However, children who have been particulary conscientious may be awarded special privileges--e.g., a "basketball game" played with cloth ball and net in the hallway. (In that particular practice, Mrs. Mercer may be said to be less strict than others at the school; the game, which she played along with the children, received some frowns from passing personnel because of the unaccustomed level of noise.)

Although Mrs. Mercer says, "I want them (the children) to think I'm mean," she does not present a consistently stern, forbidding mask. Often she will scold first, then soften her tone, as below:

Mrs. Mercer (harshly): "I didn't tell you to open your book, Sara." Then softly, as if to aid Sara in the task: "You should have your paper on top of your book." Then, "You're going to read to me first." She also uses affectionate terms at times to soften the command, as in the following example, which also demonstrates harshness followed by gentleness:

Mrs. Mercer: "You're holding us up, Sara." More softly: "Hurry up, sweetie. Just write your name. You have to go back later and do the date. You should be finished. Everybody else is finished."

She will also hug a child, usually not during "work" times (now and then, as a reward for performance) but at the end of the day.

Sara's behavior might differ in a group conducted by one of the teacher-assistants. The following notes ar explicit in the regard:

> The group-work is writing, conducted by a mild-mannered teaching assistant. Children are copying letters. Sara is behind the others in page work because of absenteeism but squickly catches up.
>
> Sara says, "I'm finished, I'm finished," then yawns hard. Yawns again. She looks up and sees a girl from the math group (middle group) standing near her chair and says, "What you doing over here?" While other children's work is being checked by the assistant, Sara "dances" at seat, stamping her feet in time, then gets up and wriggles her body. She looks over another child's shoulder, then sits and begins exploring pages further along in the book. Continues "dancing" in seat, gets up and says, "I'm finished," then says to the assistant, "Hurry up and do that" (checking work of other children). She examines books on a shelf but does not open one, stands and leans over the table, slides back into the chair (other children are all seated), gets up and dances again, catches observer looking at her and sits down, starts bouncing in her chair as soon as the observer looks away. She examines the books again, opens one briefly, then puts it back, picks up her workbook and says, "I'm after her." Assistant tells her to sit down and wait. She begins looking at pictures in her workbook, says, "Eagle. Eagle", then gets up, starts to sit down again, misses chair and falls. Gets up, whirls, dances, takes her book to the assistant as all the children rise to get in line to move to the next section for group work.

Sara would never say, "Hurry up and do that," to Mrs. Mercer. The Sara who emerges in the foregoing notes is more nearly like the Sara I observed at home--playful, aggressive verbally, and unafraid of the adults at hand--than the Sara who appears in the previous notes.

Mrs. Porter says frankly that her attitude towards discipline is far more lax than that of Mrs. Mercer's classroom and that projected by the school's administration. She smiles and shrugs, conveying by her manner that she has no fixed opinions in either direction. She says, "I watch them (school personnel), and I can go along with it as long as it (strictness of discipline) doesn't get out of hand." At the same time, her manner suggests that she isn't convinced that her own approach is the last word. She is well aware of the adjustment Sara must make from the home environment to that of school. Of Mrs. Mercer, she says, "She teaches the way she was taught, and I guess she figures that, since she learned, that (approach) must be the best way."

Mrs. Mercer has no sympathy for teachers who say, "How much can I do? Their mothers have them for twenty hours; I have them for only ____ hours." She says that the school hours are sufficient if the time is used wisely. At the same time, she does not minimize the impact of the home. In the orientation session with parents, she says, "Parents are the best teachers. If you read, your children will read. Let them see you read." She advises parents to make use of available aids such as the "Back to School" section of the city's black-oriented newspaper as well as sections of other city papers that provide tips on teaching and on activities that can be undertaken at home--e.g., puppetry. She asks parents to read to their children. She advises them with regards to homework ("Take ten minutes and read the directions, then ask if she/he understands....The homework has to be signed but don't correct it"). She tells parents ways they can assist the child in practicing aspects of school work ("I assume you know the long and short sounds of the vowels") without correcting specific lessons.

In addition to the teaching philosophy and the above, the parent-orientation includes safety information; provides an overview of the daily classroom schedule; provides information about trips; gives parents the routine for requesting conferences ("call the office and say you want one"); gives tips on helping children assume responsibility ("Don't put homework book and library book in the bag for the child"); provides information about library cards ("Children can get one as soon as they can print their names"); and the like. The orientation is held in the classroom; parents sit in chairs brought in for the occasion; Mrs. Mercer stands near her desk. The tone she assumes is teacherly but approachable.

Mrs. Mercer grew up in a neighborhood that was "over the top"--one that was economically and socially for blacks advanced over other neighborhoods represented in the "bottom to top" continuum. She lives in an apartment nearby the neighborhood she grew up in and attends church on a street that marks a dividing line between the "top" and "over the top". Her personal lifestyle is a quiet one that revolves essentially around home, her children, a few friends, relatives--many of who are professionals--church and women's social/educational organizations.

Mrs. Porter's early life was spent in various residencies in several sections of the city, including some years spent in the neighborhood in which she now lives. She does not consider her present residence and circumstances to be permanent. She believes that much better is in store for her even though she does not know exactly what form the improvement will take or just how it will come about. Improvement has to do with getting out of the projects and getting more education and having a good job with salary enough that she doesn't have to worry so much about making ends meet. Improvement also has to do with personal associations--having neighbors and friends whose aspirations and activities will provide a "push" for herself. As she says it: "...a community...on the move, that would motivate you to go out and get a job and to upgrade your income so that you could realize some of the better things in life, you know, sort of like to build up your morale. This immediate community that I live in, I mean, you don't have to prove anything here."

Mrs. Porter does not show up for her job as a parent-scholar for a week. During that week Sara also is absent several days from school. Mrs. Porter tells me finally that she is having some emotional difficulties and mentions matters she just can't seem to get together, matters having to do with housekeeping, laundry, getting the children to school, and the like. She says she has not gotten back to her college classes and has had to drop them. She says that she has been staying in the house all day everyday and not caring to go outside. We discuss emotions, my own and hers, and how difficult it is sometimes to keep oneself going. I tell her about a psychiatrist I have visited, and I offer to make an appointment for her,

Mrs. Porter tells me that she prefers to go to a neighborhood health center. She also tells me that she has made an appointment to talk to a pastor in a church nearby the projects, a church located inside the triangle. She tells me that if those moves prove not to be helpful, she will see the psychiatrist I have recommended.

My home visits end shortly thereafter. Mrs. Porter goes to the health center and receives assistance that helps ber begin functioning better. The children begin attending school more regularly. She makes a new friend and begins looking for a job. She also begins to become seriously involved with community politics.

DISCUSSION

A number of issues are raised by the foregoing profiles. One has to do with the impact of the observer. To what extent was the behavior of the three individuals--mother, child and teacher--a response to the presence of an outsider? Certainly there were instances in which Mrs. Porter was impatient with Sara and raised her voice, occasionally in the presence of the observer. The general tone of Mrs. Porter's manner with Sara, however, was conciliatory. She appeared to some extent to be apologetic about her "laxness"--her own word--and said on one occasion that it was difficult to be "strict" in the projects; the apartments were small, the elevators were often broken, and there was no play area on the floors outside the apartments--all of which meant that children suffered a sense of confinement because of the physical environment. In addition, she equated strictness with the holding of one's children apart from other children, which she felt, under the circumstances, was unrealistic.

There is the issue of "performance" for the sake of the observer. Clearly, Mrs. Porter wanted to impress others with Sara's reading ability. The presence of the observer simply provided opportunity for occurrences that were already considered desirable by all concerned, including, in the example given of Sara's taped performence, Mrs. Porter's neighbors.

Mrs. Porter is an astute observer herself and was certainly aware that the outsider, given the nature of th observational focus, would make note of such a comment as that concerning the Terman study and the use of psychologists' children for purposes of study. The significant factors, however, are that she had read the article (she had a subscription to the magazine) and the comment was appropriate to the moment--would probably not have been made otherwise. Mrs. Porter was not one to miss seizing upon such an opportunity for display of her own gifts; she was a performer herself in the sense of being able to appreciate what behavior would be most likely noticed as well as when and for what purpose and then being able to rise to the occasion. When I mentioned, in the course of preparing this paper, that I was ever aware of her complexity and that the profile of her was proving somewhat difficult, she responded by reading to me a letter that had been written some years earlier by an associate as a personal reference for school enrollment and pointed out to me that she felt the characterization was accurate. She was trying to be helpful and at the same time was "cueing" me. Mrs. Porter admitted that she had many "faces" and that she believed it was necessary in the urban environment to be able to "roll with the punches" and to have a "self" ready to cope with every occasion while maintaining personal reserve--in common terms to be able to "tell 'em everything and nothing". She projected more self-assurance in telling me about the latest happening in the state capitol affecting the economic well-being of local residents than in talking about the everyday demands of deomesticity. Her comments and speculations regarding community matters always proved to be provocative.

The possibility of modification because of the observer of Mrs. Mercer's response to the children in affectionate displays is worthy of comment. Were the instances of harshness of reprimand followed by softness affected by the observer's presence? Mrs. Mercer's stated preference of approach was one of sternness. She was more consistent with her official "mask" in the first days of observations than the latter. She had periods of being more or less stern. There is more reason to believe that the harsh-soft behavior was an expression showing through of the conflict in official and unofficial self than that she was responding to the observer's presence. When Mrs. Mercer first said to me that she was most pleased with the children's performance over-all, I was surprised. In observing, I had imagined she would be privately as critical of the level of children's response as she was openly with them. Her "I would never let them know" posture was designed to keep the children striving always to perform better. Also implied, of course, was that they hadn't yet pleased the teacher--that for the reward of stars or dots or "C" sprawled across the face of the page or at times a hug or a loolipop, they had to do better work (Note Sara's "Do you think

Mrs. Mercer will like it?" as well as her insistence that I cover the page at home with a star, as I later observed Mrs. Mercer to do in the classroom).

The relation of performance to authority (type and quality of performance in response to the form authority takes) is one that will be referred to in other contexts within this report. It is noteworthy that Sara, in her performance and behavior, distinguished between the central authority figure in the classroom and intermediate adult figures. I had far less impression that, during group-work conducted by assistant, she was performing immediately for approval of the assistants. In one instance, in math group, she sat and "played" with the counters, lining them up in various ways and stacking them, instead of carrying out the task at hand--a behavior I could not imagine of her in close range of Mrs. Mercer. And the particular assistant was one who, unlike the milder-mannered assistant reported in the profile (page), employed intimidation in voice and manner--berating the children constantly and loudly--in order to force them to remain attentive to their work.

A recurrent theme within the school is that of "work" as opposed to "play". Mrs. Mercer distinguished between "brain work" and "play". In the first activity of the day, for approximately thirty minutes, children were allowed to select games for seat play. Games included puzzles, lotto, peg boards, parquetry, number games, and the like. These activities allowed individual choice to children, but represented "brain work" activity as opposed to, for instance, play with large blocks or with dolls or sand, which represented for Mrs. Mercer "play". Pasting and painting were also considered "play". The child who approached the block corner or play room would be quickly reminded that "play" was afternoon activity and that he/she should choose a game that required thinking.

The following are teacher comments made during the first activity period:

> --If you can't play without teacher, I'll have to put that game away (a few children were playing a group game and having disagreements).
>
> --Put that game away (group game), because Doris isn't playing it correctly.

--No coloring; get something to make your brains work--
spelling or number line games.

--That's too easy; get something that will make your
brain work.

Note that "play" was used, in the first comment above, to mean "play- or game-work" (solitary or group brain-work through individual choice). It was also used generally to mean activity that did not involve "thinking" as opposed to activity that required thinking ("work" or "brain work"). Certain activities might fit either category, depending on the circumstance. Coloring, as in the third comment above, might be permissible to a child in the lowest group during free-choice "brain work" period but not to a child in the highest group.

Arts and crafts in general fell towards the "play" end of the continuum, not in the sense of being devalued in themselves, but as contenders for priority status in the curriculum. When Mrs. Mercer says that she is opposed to play as major fare for kindergarteners, she is referring to a "cutting and pasting" curriculum that would elevate creative arts expression as a learning tool above traditional skills exercises.

Mrs. Mercer allows time for creative arts expression at least once a week but appears less comfortable and less sure of herself in that area than the more directly academic. The following notes were taken on an arts and crafts day. My goal that day was simply to write down everything the teacher said:

--Where are the tops to your flowers, Calvin?

--Are you helping him build? Don't get any more blocks
until you use the ones that are out here already.

--Why are you washing your hands? You don't have to wash
your hands. You're just going to do something else messy.

--Look at all those blocks you didn't use. They're still
on the floor.

--Your picture's beautiful, but you didn't paint over the
whole page. Why did you leave the white spaces?

On the other hand, Mrs. Mercer is comfortable with expression in children as required in "work" activities. On my days of observation, I never heard her use "creativity" in the latter context. The preferred would be "thinking". The following is the product of a group essay effort based on a trip the children had taken to the city's art museum. Such an essay was routinely produced following field trips. Children contributed sentences voluntarily, which Mrs. Mercer then printed on a large pad so that all could see the product taking shape.

> Our Trip to the ______ Museum of Art
>
> We rode on the elevator to the second floor. We looked at different shapes on the ceiling. We saw a marble with white triangle. We saw a sculpture of Diana standing on a ball.
>
> We went into another room where we saw more sculpture. We saw furniture with sculptures. We rode the elevator to the first floor to look at paintings. We saw Indians and a bear and Noah's Ark. On our way out, we saw a painting with a grandfather and a boy blessing the table. We saw a beautiful bedroom. We enjoyed our trip.

Mrs. Mercer and Mrs. Porter met face to face regularly; Mrs. Porter brought Sara to school in the mornings and picked her up after school. In addition, Mrs. Porter had a conference with Mrs. Mercer each time reports were issued. In an initial interview, when I asked Mrs. Porter whether anyone from the school ever called or visited, she answered, "Oh yes, Mrs. Mercer calls me all the time. She's crazy about my little girl." The fact is that, regardless of the motivation behind the comment, Mrs. Porter respected Mrs. Mercer as a person and a teacher. And Mrs. Mercer often expressed that Mrs. Porter was an "Intelligent, well-informed person." Mrs. Mercer's argument with Mrs. Porter was that Sara didn't get to school regularly and on time.

The question to be answered is this: What is the major factor in accounting for Sara's academic performance? My observations in the home did not reveal that concentrated, sustained activities to reinforce reading and writing skills were taking place to an extent that would be noteworthy. The atmosphere was stimulating in that Mrs. Porter was literate and took a lively interest in school and community. The one factor that stands out is that Mrs. Porter expects Sara to achieve--absenteeism, home disorganization or sleepiness notwithstanding. She believes that Sara is intelligent and communicates that belief to the child and to anyone else who is around.

Whatever may be wanting in terms of regularity of mealtimes and bedtimes, at home Sara is learning to be independent, assertive and confident of her abilities. In the environments of home and school, she hears no other message except that she can perform well academically and that she must in order to (1) please the adults who are significant in her life and (2) maintain status in the "performing" sense. Whether or not she is internalizing whatever she will need to sustain the present level of performance will probably not be apparent for some time.

III. PARENT INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

Interviews were conducted with sixteen parents. Parents were selected randomly, from among those who responded favorably to a letter sent from the principal, asking permission for the interviewer to go into the homes. All interviews were conducted in parents' homes. Although a questionnaire was devised (attached) for interviewer's use, the questionnaire was not used extensively. By the third interview, the researcher had abandoned use of the questionnaire, except for periodic referral in order to remind herself of key areas that might not have been touched upon in the unstructured interview. The process of the interview tended to be questions put by the interviewer, and answers to those questions given by the parents. Questioning, however, was tempered according to the flow of the conversation at the moment. Most parents addressed several potential questions in the course of answering one. In addition, information was often offered that was additional to the substance of the original questionnaire and yet useful in contributing to the interviewer's understanding. For instance, one parent talked at length of the role her religious faith had played in influencing her to improve her own reading and writing habits as well as the practices of her children. Another, after requesting that the tape be turned off temporarily, went into a back room and brought out materials that had been contributed to the family's resources--the materials were workbooks, readers and games--illegally by a relative who worked at a facility that produced such materials.

The unstructured interview also allowed interviewer and parent to spend maximum time on matters that occupied parents' attention as opposed to matters that, although they had been legitimately included in the original instrument in an attempt to "cover" major issues according to the researchers' judgment, were of peripheral concern to parents or produced confusion in the asking.

Persons interviewed were mothers primarily although in a third of the interviews, a father or--in one instance--grandfather participated. In those instances, the interview was begun with the mother or grandmother, often with the man of the house disclaiming any interest in participating. The interviewer would invite the man's participation at every opportunity. For instance, if the mother called into the other room and asked, "Wasn't ________ at Harriet Tubman when you were there?", the interviewer might ask, "Oh, did he grow up in this neighborhood?", then say, "You're the one I should be talking to." Because most of the interviews were conducted within the housing projects and mothers were welfare recipients, it was understandable to the interviewer that fathers might be reluctant about participating before they had ascertained the reason for the visit. Once they had joined in, their input was invaluable. Fathers tended to be more certainly oriented than mothers where the community was concerned. They "got around" more and claimed to know what was where. Mothers almost invariably claimed that they stayed close to home, didn't go in the bars, and didn't seek recreational outlets within the community except among family and close friends.

Of the sixteen households, eleven parents were born and raised in the city, seven in and around the triangle. Of the others, parents came from nearby states--New York, Maryland--or the South. Only one parent was born and raised in the mid-West, none farther west.

Most parents (7) had been living in the neighborhood ten or more years or (5) less than two years. As small as the sample was, the length of residency, on the surface of it, confirmed both the conviction, stated informally by school personnel, that pupils are linked by kinship to long-term residents and that transiency is widespread, with many new families coming into the area, drawn by the projects. In twelve households, there was some previous link with the school, through attendance of parents or relatives of parents.

The average number of children per household in the sample was 2.3. The largest family had six children. Most families (11) interviewed lived in the housing projects. Two lived in houses in the triangle, and two were families who had moved away from the triangle within the last two years but were still living in the section of the city of which the triangle is part.

Homes and apartments represented a great range in style of furnishings and apparent comfort. Even within the high-rise buildings of the projects, nothing could be taken for granted about the internal appearance of an apartment. Some were depressingly stark and underdeveloped whereas others were carefully put together with distinctive taste regarding materials and design and color. The average household was somewhere in-between, comfortable and well-cared-for but not showy.

Children were sometimes present during the interviews. Occasionally they chimed in with their own comments. They were seldom discouraged from sitting and listening and commenting. Typically, children were curious initially and listened, then wandered away to play or wandered in and out the room at will.

DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION

Parents without exception said that they "liked" the school. Major reasons offered included the strictness of discipline, the "back to basics" instructional approach, and the "concernedness" of teachers. Discipline and instruction were linked necessarily in the minds of most parents. As one stated, "How are you going to teach them if they won't listen?" As a consequence, most parents interviewed felt that Harriet Tubman was able to experience its measure of success with basics instruction because teachers were able to maintain order in the classroom. As one parent said, what she liked about Harriet Tubman was the "strictness and the concernedness." "Concernedness" implied that teachers would enforce discipline; disciplining children and caring for them were complementary factors in the minds of parents. As one mother said, "It (strict discipline) kind of protects (1)* them in a lot of ways because, well, the neighborhood ain't really that much different from other neighborhoods, but there's a lot of--well, I guess it goes on everywhere."

Interviewer:	"You think the discipline protects the kids, or what do you mean?"
Parent:	"...to the extent that they're not able to just walk off whenever they want to."

(2) Another parent equated discipling with parenting, where principal and teachers were concerned:

> Some children don't get discipline at home so that's why they have to get it in school, because some parents will tell (the principal) to give their child discipline.... I have seen where the parents will tell the teacher to give (children) discipline, and I feel as though if they are upright teachers, they're not going to hurt that child. The only reason why they discipline them is because the child has to mind (the teacher) as well as the parents. But if they get that taught at home, they won't have that problem in school, but a lot of parents will tell you that they're by themselves and they don't have no husband, no man, and they appreciate them helping to discipline their children. Because this is what some of them need. In other words, this school over here is more like a private school...more like what I want for my children.

When parents said "the school", most often their point of reference was the teacher(s) of their child or children--teachers past as well as present. Individuals of secondary importance in the relationship between home and school were the principal, followed by the home-school coordinator, the vice-principal and the counselor. Even if they did not feel they knew him personally, parents had their own sense of what the principal was like and what he contributed to the effective functioning of the school. The principal at Harriet Tubman was spoken of as a disciplinarian. Parents applauded his emphasis on discipline although some were concerned that the punishment, as meted out, be justly applied: that is, that a child not be punished for something he or she did not do and that the punishment not be overly severe in relation to the infringement.

Discipline and the dress code were often linked in parents' conversation.

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*Parenthesized numerals indicate separate sections in field notes and transcribed interviews.

Children are required to "dress up" at least once every two weeks, on assembly days. Upper grade boys, seventh and eighth graders, are expected to wear ties to school everyday. Jeans are not acceptable as school attire, and girls are not allowed to wear pants.

The history of the dress code is that it was in force through the middle fifties and was abolished during the late fifties, under the tenure of a principal considered by many--teachers and parents--to have been lenient to the extent of permissiveness--i.e., relaxation of standards. When asked by the interviewer, "How do you feel about discipline in the school?" one parent answered: "Oh, I love it. I'm all for it. Because as far as I'm concerned, when they let that dress code go at the school, that was the worst thing they could have done." (3)

Other comments on the dress code included the following:

(4) Parent: When (child) went to (nearby public school), they wore whatever they wanted to wear to school. It was hard 'cause I used to buy him dress slacks and all that, and all he wanted to wear was sneaks and Wranglers, because that's what they were allowed to wear. Over at Harriet Tubman they can't dress like that, and this is really teaching him 'cause he's a teenager; he's thirteen, and I feel much better because he's picked up over here (Harriet Tubman). When he was going to school at (nearby school), my daughter was four. She knew how to tie her shoes and he didn't. When he came up here to Harriet Tubman, he learned everything. He's good in math. The only thing that he has a problem with is spelling. He hates to study."

The above quote shows linkage in the mind of the parent between the dress code and the child's "picking up" or improvement in maturity and school performance.

(5)

Parent: ...One thing they do that I admire, this dress-up thing, every other week.

Interviewer: You like that.

Parent: I do. It teaches them how to be men and women, have manners. They don't have to be bummy all the time.

Interviewer: (The dress code) is kind of different.

Parent: Yeah, and they have to be dressed (every day). I like that part.

Interviewer: It looks nice. I've come in there and seen them all going to assembly.

Parent: And the boys have to have ties; if you don't have on a tie, you can't go in. And the girls have to be dressed up. I like that. Teaching them manners.

Interviewer: A lot of people say if they dress up, they might act a little better.

Parent: Maybe. I don't know if it's true, though.

(6) Interviewer: How do you feel about the dress code there? Does it bother you?

Parent: I'm for it. The only time it bothers me is when I really can't afford it because the children really have a limited amount of clothes. And I don't have a washing machine and a dryer, so it's like a hassle keeping up with their things. But I understand the purpose. When you're dressed properly, you do feel better. You know, your whole image is uplifted. And so you react better.

(7) Parent: I say I might wear pants all the time...but girls don't look right with pants constantly.... With the dress code, they're into wearing skirts more.

Parents expressed approval of the dress code in spite of the hardship on them financially. The impression was that parents could say, "I'm doing right by my child" or "I'm giving my child the benefits of a proper upbringing" even though the material advantages they would have liked to offer the child were not available.

A GOOD SCHOOL

(8) Interviewer: What do you think is the main thing that makes a good school? Say, for instance, the reading and writing skills or parent involvement or dedication of teachers?

Parent: Discipline first, because if you don't have discipline, you really don't have anything. You have to get that out of the way before you can teach anything.

Parents' responses as to what makes a good school has to be understood in the light of the blend they assumed where the factors of discipline and instruction are concerned. Without exception, the parents interviewed did not believe teachers could do an effective job unless the teachers had a "good hold" on the class. However, parents did not believe that teachers bore total responsibility for the results obtainable: that is, for the success with which teachers were able to maintain order. As one parent expressed it, "...the teachers cannot do it alone. The basics have to start at home. I mean, you can't send your child there and expect the teachers
(9) to work miracles. You have to do that yourself. At home, if you've got one or two or three (children), you can do it. You've got thirty or forty kids to deal with...you can't do it."

The atmosphere in which instruction takes place is as much a focus of concern for parents as the content of instruction. When asked directly about the "Three R's and discipline (How important do you think it is what they teach?)" one parent answered, "It's not so much what they teach, it's how they go about it." A more extended comment along the same lines demonstrates the blend that is conceived of where instruction and the environment of instruction are concerned:

Interviewer: What do you think mostly makes a good school?

(10) Parent: Well, I feel as though what makes for a good school is the teachers and the principal and the way they're teaching children. If they start off letting the children know that they are not there to play, then that's what makes their school disciplined--what they teach them and the way that they care for the school. Because, like I said, Harriet Tubman so far is the best (school) that my children have went to. I have been in there and I have never yet seen that building dirty. I have never seen no teachers walking around there looking like students or don't care what the children do in the classroom. Every classroom I have been in, all the children are sitting down doing what they know they're supposed to do. I have never been in there where the kids are just all around the room doing what they want to do. And I have been in plenty of schools like that, but not over Harriet Tubman.

In expressing why she preferred her son's previous teacher to the current (and why she believed her son preferred him, also), one parent said, "...As soon as they walked in the door, he would tell them, 'If you're not going to do your work, don't even bother to come in the room.' He don't take no stuff off of them. He would hit them but not to hurt them, but to
(11) let them know that they are there for a reason, not to play...."

Teachers who "don't take any stuff" are admired. It is assumed that teachers whose disciplinary control is lax or ineffective will not be able to be good teachers no matter what their preparation. And teachers are identified along those lines more readily than they are identified according to the scores the children have received on standardized tests. Teachers are remembered, also, historically according to their talents as disciplinarians. When asked about a teacher who had gone on to become a political figure in the community, a parent answered, "She was a good teacher. She didn't take nothing off of you. She would crack your fingers with a ruler in a minute."

The extended comment (#10) above reflects the rule the school had for staff and faculty where dress was concerned: women teachers were expected to wear dresses and men teachers, suits and ties. A few renegades existed among the teachers, but the principal (and teachers who strongly supported his stand) made no secret of the fact that their attitude was that to ignore the dress code was to behave with insubordination. In the opinion of the principal, it was hypocritical to demand that students adhere to a dress code and not expect the same of teachers and staff. For him, it was a matter of example. He referred to an instance in the past wherein a new teacher had worn jeans and "see through" blouses to school, and soon thereafter the style had been adopted by one or more girl students.

In his advocacy of strictly enforced rules and regulations of behavior--that children were quiet in the classroom, that they were unfailingly polite in speaking to adults, and that they did not "play" in the hallways or classrooms nor make unnecessary noise, the principal was self-consciously continuing what he--and others in the school and community--saw as being a tradition begun by the original black principal of the school. Parents, many of whom--twelve of the sixteen households represented in the interviews included parents or close relatives of parents who had attended Harriet

Tubman--had longstanding ties with the school, generally believed (because of their own remembrances or those communicated by others) that the school was better in the days of the original principal and that the effort of the current principal to uphold the traditional values was commendable. As stated above, the linkage of the present with the past was deliberate. One parent stated, "One time we had a meeting over there (Harriet Tubman) (12) concerning...the public schools...(and) discipline. I can't remember exactly what it was about. Anyway (the principal) decided to bring up the history of the school and go into all about what Harriet Tubman is really about. And we sat there really listening to how we were (once) young and how our parents raised us and all the things that were involved in discipline. I understand what they're doing. Until it gets way out of proportion, then I guess it's all right. Because, really, I'm pretty lax with the children, you know." Another said, "I tell you, if I was still in (the city) with my grandkids, if Harriet Tubman was still standing, I would send them. I really would. 'Cause even people I have heard that went to Harriet Tubman (who are) grown, they say Harriet Tubman has always been a good, strict school, you know."

The original principal "was a legend, still (is) a legend in the neighborhood," according to one grandparent, a sentiment that was expressed (13) by everyone in the school (teachers, staff, principal) and community (store owners, parents, residents) who responded to the mention of the name or chose to bring it up. When asked, "What made (the original principal) so unusual," comments usually included the following: "She was a strict person." "She didn't take too much." "She was a person of her word." "She did what she said she was going to do."

Although "good and strict" and "strictness and concernedness" were usually mentioned in the same breath, parents often had ambivalent feelings about the manner, occasion and extent of discipline "given" in any one instance. Comment #12 above reflects the watchfulness that was often expressed by parents at the same time they commended in general the seriousness with which the school addressed the issue of discipline.

Given the umbrella approval of "strictness", areas of ambivalence included corporal punishment; misapplied punishment (wrong child); observed incidents that may or may not have involved the parent's own child; and punishment considered too severe for the deed.

One parent complained that her daughter, an earnest student, anxious to please the teachers by maintaining both good grades and good behavior, was shouted at mistakenly and yanked out of line; as a result, the child became withdrawn and unhappy for some days afterwards. The parent expressed that she feared such an incident, if it recurred, would sour her daughter on school. Another parent complained that her son was forced to write "2,000 times--'I must bring my ruler to school'" because he had left the ruler at home by mistake. She felt the punishment was severe under the circumstances.

Other comments, falling in one or more of the categories above, included the following:

14) I had went to the school when people were being examined that day. A lot of kids were getting examined. I was coming down the hall and ____ hollered at this boy. _____ asked the boy what was he doing out of the auditorium. And (the boy) told _____ he had to go to the bathroom. And _____ hollered at him; I mean, the whole hallway you could hear ______. _______told (the boy) to get against the wall...and all this time, I thought that wasn't even necessary.

15) What I have seen (of the discipline practices) so far is half-half. I can't say how it could be, because I have never saw what a child have done, but I have saw sometime how he got punished for it. So I say it's in-between... Now if a child curse at a teacher or the principal, yeah, he should be disciplined for that, but not overly extreme, 'cause kids has feelings, too... They do have some very rude kids...but there is still a right way to do it. I would give any teacher permission to correct my child, but don't over-correct my child if I don't correct him.

16) I hear a lot of parents say, "better not hit my child"... but I told my children just like this: I have never gave ______ permission to hit them, but I know that if he hit them, he hit them for a reason...And they've been in there three years and he has never hit them or...sent for me.... So they know what I'm saying, that if he has to chastize them, I'm gonna chastize them, plus I'm going to tell him that I never gave him permission because he has never asked ...for permission; but I have worked...around children, and I know that some children will cause you to hit them.

As stated above, the teacher is the most direct link to the school for parents. If parents liked the teacher(s) their children had at the time of the interview, they were more favorably disposed towards the school than otherwise. In effect, a parent might say, "Last year, when (child) had Miss X, I wasn't too happy, but the year before, she had Mr. W., and she made a lot of progress. Now she has Miss C., and I'm just waiting to see whether she'll pick up again."

Occasionally, the success of the school experience, in the parent's
17) view, could depend on the sex of the teacher: "He had a man teacher over there last year, and (the teacher) taught them...to do their homework... like a game.... So now he's having problems with this woman teacher, which he don't like (woman teachers). I never could figure this out; as long as he's got a man teacher, I don't have no bad results, and just as soon as they give him a woman teacher, I get all these problems."

Understandably then, answers to the question, "What don't you like
18) about the school?" included often a reference to a teacher or teachers--e.g., "Every now and then some of the teachers...I don't care for the teachers--some of them." Following such an answer, the parent would recount some specific incident involving her own child and a teacher--a disciplinary action or one that indicated for the parent a "personality conflict"--i.e., some treatment of the child considered to have been unfair.

Certain teachers' names were mentioned far more frequently than others, and those teachers were among the ones who had taught at the school for twenty years or more. Those few teachers seemed to carry the weight of much of the image the school had in the minds of parents; considering this fact in light of the above--that parents characterized the school according to their experiences with individual teachers--it can be appreciated that those few teachers over the years had impressed themselves and their style upon more individuals--parents and, in some instances, grandparents--than teachers more recently employed. It is significant, also, that those teachers were mentioned most frequently among the "top" teachers by school personnel.

Where both discipline and instruction are concerned, parents placed considerable responsibility on the influence of the home and support of parents for what the school was able to do. The general attitude can be summed up in one parent's statement that "You can't teach a child in school if you don't have the cooperation at home."

Among suggestions for improving the school, parents offered most frequently strict discipline and more extracurricular activities--activities of a social or athletic nature that children might participate in after school.

They believed they had adequate opportunities to become involved in school matters, and the question, "Do you feel you have had an impact on school policies and practices?" did not strike a chord for several reasons: 1) parents conceived of their input into the school in an individual-to-individual way--i.e., whether or not they felt they were welcomed inside the classrooms where their children were learning and whether or not the teachers were receptive to them in discussing their children's progress; 2) parents, for the most part, did not envision themselves as having the expertise or the power to determine the direction of the school in an ongoing sense. The school and what it was about was a "given" that they responded to either positively or negatively but nonetheless passively except in the circumstance of a crisis--and the crises were individual ones: what had been done or not been done where a particular child was concerned.

On the whole, parents were generous in their assessments of the dedication and capabilities of school personnel. Where they could identify failings in specific situations, they looked to specific factors in those situations for placing blame: inability of the teacher to enforce discipline; "listening" or not listening on the part of the child; the child's attitude in wanting or not wanting to learn. They were grateful, for the most part, that their children were attending a school wherein personnel had a "hold" on children's behavior--i.e., cared enough about the children and their education to provide an environment conducive to learning. One parent expressed her opportunities for involvement in these terms:

19)

> I remember years back that you couldn't go to school and (have teachers) show you what the children were doing--you couldn't volunteer to do it...but that's when the parents complained. But now you can go there if you want to and stay from nine in the morning till three o'clock, until the children get out: volunteer. So that's really up to you when your children come home with work you don't know anything about, and you don't care or try to find out; that's on you, not on the teachers. Because I feel as

(22) I don't,..in the summer let them go around like that (to nearby recreational center) because...when they're going swimming, the kids have a tendency to try to pull them under the water and all that kind of stuff, and there's a lot of people say I'm overprotective with my kids, but I just can't help.

(23) My mother was very strict on us; she didn't give us too much headway. Sometimes you don't know if they're good or bad, so you have to give them a try. If you don't give them a try, you'll never know about these kids these days, because they're so fast...you have to. You can't hold them so tight. I trust her pretty well.

Parents were saying, "I'm not as strict on my children as my parents were on me." At the same time, they were saying, "I'm overprotective." Most claimed that they held their children close to home as much as possible and that younger ones did not have access to neighborhood recreational facilities unless accompanied by an adult or older sibling. They did not feel, however, that their children were being denied play and recreation; the consensus was that "We have a lot of fun at home, just among ourselves." The "ourselves" often included family and close friends. According to mothers, male children, in particular, weren't always acquiescent to restrictions imposed upon them:

(24) Tic-tac-toe, checkers, they try to get everything through the house. Basketball--they get a hoop, a hanger, and put (the) hoop on my door, and they take a sock and play basketball. 'Cause, see, I don't have them going outside, up and down the street.... My son who's twelve, that's the one...I told him..."I'm tired of whipping your behind. Aren't you tired of getting whipped?" I said, "I'll try to sit down and reason with you--you gonna do what's asked of you." I mean, we have rules and regulations in this house...But that's the only one. Because...he wants to get in this little clique around here. And that's the very one he was scared to death of when we moved here...

That same parent said of her seventeen-year-old:

(25) Barbara will be eighteen, (but) she still don't have no male company! (Laughs and laughs.) She still don't have no male company! I said, when she come out of school, then she can have male company. I said, she gonna finish school,.... I said, she ain't missing nothing. I said, why does she need heartache and pain? Why should she be thrown into a situation that she have no control over?

Parents' expectations of children generally were that they stay out of trouble--acts committed upon them as well as committed by them--do their homework, complete their chores at home (washing dishes, cleaning room, putting out trash, and the like), and obey parental orders. Children's time and activities were not structured, on the whole, beyond those basic requirements: that is, parents did not attempt to keep children "busy" perpetually and definitively. The significant factor is that parents felt that they had to hold children close to them and close to home--that, in their minds, because of the environment outside the home, restriction of children's mobility indicated good parenting. Whether they succeeded or not is not so important an issue in understanding parents' conception of responsible parenting as the fact that they needed to believe that they succeeded.

One parent summed up the prevailing attitudes about outside-and-inside the home.

(26)

> Well, what can I say? You know, it's a place to live. I live inside the house. I don't live outside the house. And this is how I was raised. Long as you have a unit--live in a unit and pay your gas, electric and heat, you can't worry about the surroundings. You don't live outside. I mean, personally I don't like living down here but...it's a place, and this is all I can afford right now.

Of course, parents did "worry" about the outside where their safety and the safety of their children were concerned. However, the statement above expresses the fact that families in the projects--high rise and low rise buildings--as well as families on surrounding streets did see their homes as havens and did believe--needed to believe--that once they had closed their doors, they could create an environment that fostered traditional kinds of values for themselves and their children.

Responses regarding the neighborhood itself were varied. Parents who liked the neighborhood pointed to familiarity with the environment and people--the fact that friends and family were there and that memory associations were strong. Some parents expressed that most neighborhoods they would have access to in the city, according to their present income, would be about the same. Considering the bottom to top geographical designations (see discussion of boundaries), parents never expressed a desire to move towards the bottom, though several revealed that they would welcome a chance to move in the direction of the top. Dissatisfactions with the neighborhood centered around fighting, primarily among children; disapproval of neighbor' lifestyles and behavior--cussin', swearing, permitting too much "running in and out"; disapproval of other parents' disciplining of children--own children as well as the children of others; conviction that residents were passive about their life-circumstances ("People have accepted their condition. They can't get out unless guided," complained one parent.) Parents without exception identified Harriet Tubman as being a factor that contributed favorably to their remaining in the neighborhood. The consensus was that the school, in its attempts to uphold the traditions--"manners", instruction in the "basics", proper dress and behavior--was making a stand in the face of continuing urban decay and transiency.

Parents usually said, "I keep to myself." Or, "I don't get involved with people around here." That attitude prevailed even in the high rises where it was evident that parents knew one another, at least as acquaintances, knew who was on what floor, who the children were, and what other apartments were like. The sentiment of solitariness was expressed also by parents living in houses or low rises. Parents needed to believe both that they were set apart from neighbors with respect to aspirations or lifestyle and that they were enough known and accepted to be protected from harm. The parent who
27) said, "I stay by myself" and "I'm overprotective with my children" could also say, "Living in this neighborhood...if I leave out of here at night I have a sense of security...because most of the boys around here are my son's friend and they know (me)...and really (I) don't be worrying about stuff like that. But it's the ones that come in the neighborhood (from outside)."

The ideal relation to the neighbors for parents was one of apartness tempered by the warmth and protectiveness that was afforded by having a few close friends and some family nearby.

A thorny issue for all parents was that of the disciplining of the children of others in the neighborhood. Neighborhood friendships and even family relations had at times been strained or severed because of the conflicting opinions of parents about who should discipline their children and how. The following quotes reflect the lack of consensus regarding the disciplining of the chldren of others:

(28) And with all (my children's) friends, if they doing something wrong, I'm gonna get on them, whether they like it or not. And if I see (my children's friends) some place during school hours they know they not supposed to be, I'll fuss at them, tell them, "look, get your behind back to school. You know that's where you belong." That's how it was when we was coming up... I hop on all of them. And a few of them I have popped. That's how we got to be friends, from me popping them. Trying to, you know, show off--"You ain't my mother. You don't tell me what to do!" And I might laugh at the boys. I might punch them on the fat part of their arm. I said, "Look, let me tell you something: I might not be your mother but I care, and you need your education. Now get your behind up there." And give them a little shove....

(29) ...I am a parent, and I don't want no other parent hitting my child, so I'm not going to hit no other parent's child.

Regarding a relative:

(30) She had wanted me to let her little boy jump down (the steps), and I would say,"John, don't jump down like that because you gonna hurt yourself." One day...I was sitting down here doing something, and I said, "If you jump down those steps, I'm going to paddle your little behind." So he came flying down the steps...so I paddled his little butt, and his mother was up there. And he started crying, so I said, "Why don't you stop crying, wipe your face," and she came down and said, "Well, I don't appreciate you hitting my son because I'm his mother. If you have anything to say, you should tell me about it--right?" ...She caught me off guard, so I looked at her, and she went back upstairs. So I went on and got my shopping done, and I went back upstairs, and I said, "I don't appreciate you approaching me about that because kids are out there...you know...he's just like a child of mine; he ain't nothing but a little boy to me--a baby." And she said, "You're a mother, and you know you're not supposed to be hitting my child." I said, "If I had took down his pants and hit his butt the first time, then he wouldn't have been doing it the second time...." So she went on about it....

Although the quotes above reflect the parents' attitudes about hitting the children of other parents, the same lack of consensus was apparent regarding verbal disciplining, interference with children's fighting, and even the approaching of other parents about a child's behavior. Parents might say, "Come and tell me when my child does something wrong." Or parents might complain that other parents "don't want to hear" about their children's behavior and "don't want you to say anything to them (parents or children) about it."

It is noteworthy that much of the same lack of consensus existed in parents' attitudes about corporal punishment in the school (see #16). Although parents perceived themselves to be reasonable in their own attitudes towards and monitoring of the disciplining of their children by others, most believed that many other parents were not so reasonable. As a consequence, parents expressed much dismay about other parents who "let their children do anything they want" and who "don't believe their children ever do anything wrong." Pervasive was parents' conviction about the existence of a permissive and destructive family (or families) down the block or around the corner or on the next floor of the high rise:

(31) Interviewer: Over the last ten years, what would you say about the neighborhood--the major kinds of things that have happened?

Parent: You know the worst thing that I can say in this neighborhood is these little children down the street right here....

Interviewer: What do they do?

Parent: Uh-uh, not what do they do, what don't they do? I mean, the mother sits on the steps looking at them--they're throwing bottles, breaking windows, throwing rocks. I was sitting on the porch one day, and the little boy threw a rock in my lap. And they got a little girl--she's about eight or nine years old; and for the past three or four years you could look out your window in the summertime at two or three o'clock in the morning and she might be coming from around the corner--little old thing. I think they got put out of _______school, because they would never go to school, and when they go in the house at night, they come out first thing in the morning, and they look just like they did when they went in at night.... They just terrorize the neighborhood. And you can sit your trash on the outside, and they get sticks and beat it up and...their mother sits down and watches them and won't say nothing at all....

(32) Then there's one down the block--her mother lets her do what she wants to do or go around the corner and stay out till dark.

(33) The only problem I really have in here is the children (from a different floor). There's a little box out there in the hallway--a little closet way--and they goes out there and they cuts out all the lights on the floor. And we stayed up here a whole week. They cut all these people's wires to the telephones up over top of everybody's door. And I don't know who's bothering these children....

The desire for self-improvement educationally and vocationally was expressed by parents interviewed; however, the specific goal of improvement and means of getting there--the where and the how--were usually stated indecisively, often with references to the past and to what were conceived of as having been missed opportunities, and with references to the frustrations of the present:

(34) I have tried to go back (to school), but the problems of my marriage...the tension....And I said I was going to go back, but I still would have to wait, because it's just too much. Because I'm working two days, then I have to help each one of (6) kids when they come home from school. I be tired. Not just because, you know, the two days; but I have to run errands...taking them to the dentist, shopping.... And trying to keep this house up and keep them in order and buying them things, trying to get bargains. And that's just too much. And then I have to deal with their personalities when they come in here.

Interviewer: You mentioned going back to school. What would you take?

Parent: Just for reading and math. And, you know, equivalency. I never got my diploma...At one time I was thinking about nursing, but they be phasing (funding) out, bumping this...I said, I'm late for that, too.... When I was in ninth grade...(my) teacher told me... you schold go to modeling school. Because I never was this fat....I always was thin, bony....She said, "I'm gonna set everything up for you." I...got hooked up with this husband of mine and just blew mind, right....And it just destroyed everything.

Most parents were taking or had recently taken a course or courses, usually at a university extension or a technical/professional academy. Favored areas were cosmetology, Spanish, psychology, sewing, medical and social para-professions, accounting and typing. One parent who had gone to school on a government grant to become a hairdresser stated that she later "started getting into some kind of social work..,but didn't follow up on it." She said, "I think I might go back and continue my education. I don't mind working with kids..small children...,maybe something like an aide...." Courses from differing disciplines often were taken at the same time--e.g., Spanish and accounting or psychology and typing. Only one parent interviewed seemed to have launched herself educationally in a specific direction in a specific program. That parent was, by observable indications, better placed economically, because of the apparent stability of the husband's income, than other parents interviewed.

All the parents expressed hopes that their children would go "all the way" in school. "All the way" might mean high-school graduation or college, depending on the parent's perception of the child's abilities and inclinations as well as depending upon the parent's perception of his/her own abilities. Parents who considered themselves to have been above-average students tended to expect that their children also would be above average. On the whole, parents had a wait-and-see attitude towards their children's chances for school success. They often used the word "slow" in describing children who were bringing home low grades although the designation was not intended necessarily to be fixed and unchangeable: "Bill could do better if he really gets started." "If and when Jane gets herself together, she'll be above average." "Tom is slow, but, you know, it takes a while for boys to settle down." "Barbara is not catching on, because her attention span is like _that_ (snaps fingers)." One parent demonstrated her coping with the term "slow" in the following manner: "Well, my son in the sixth grade, he's like slow and well--he's not slow, he's slow to catch on to things, but once he catches on to it, you know he's good at it." Flexibility in interpretation of the word "slow" is demonstrated in the following parent's account of her son's reading difficulties: "He did have a reading problem before, and (the teacher) says over the summer he has improved. He _was_ like slow, on his level." Another parent (quote #4) linked dress and achievement: "He's not retarded or anything, but he's slow, and he never did any work or anything (in a previous school) and...they wore whatever they wanted to wear to school."

In one instance, parents disagreed with each other about the designation of their child's ability.

(35) Father: Delores is about a "C" student, anyway. Sue can can be an "A" student. But Delores gonna be about average. 'Cause it just ain't there, you know.

Mother: You always saying that! "It's not there"--you should tell her she's just as smart as Sue. Maybe she can do as well.

Father: Well, I don't think I should lie to her.

Mother: It's all who applies themselves....She only does certain things (indicating interest). She works with the hands and likes the housecleaning.

The foregoing accounts indicate that parents, although they were affected by school performance and school terminology in assessing their children's abilities, were not bound by those. There was always, at the least, a dialogue that continued with themselves and their children regarding the possibilities of significantly improved school performance.

Parents of children making high grades claimed that they assisted children with homework when asked to do so but that such assistance was rarely necessary, as the children worked well independently. They did not feel that they, as parents, had to push the achievers towards accomplishment. All parents insisted that they kept books in the home--purchased from stores and/or borrowed from the public library--although parents of achievers tended to be more specific about what they considered to be aids to the child's intellectual development, as in the following:

(36) Before Janice got into school, the baby sitter that kept her (had a daughter) about five or six years older than Janice. And the babysitter would... have school with them. Janice knew a lot before she got into school that most kids don't know. She could write her name and she could count to a hundred, and write her ABC's, spell words--cat, dog, and all that. Even before kindergarten. Plus I had a tablet I had bought for her and sometimes let her write things down, and bought her educational toys and stuff. It helps a lot....

However, no generalization can safely be made about parents' perceptions as to why a child was an achiever. Certain parents felt that one child just "had it" and another didn't; others believed that their own input in some way was responsible.

BLACK ENGLISH

In the initial nine interviews, parents were asked whether they had heard the expression "Black English" and how they felt about the use of Black English in the schools. There was some confusion about the exact meaning of the expression. Several parents were of the understanding Black English was slang--"You cool, man"; "I dig that"; "You far out"; "solid"; and the like. One response indicated the parent had confused "Black English" with "Black History." Most parents had heard the expression even though they weren't all certain of its meaning; exposure to the expression had occurred through its use on an occasional television program and in newspaper commentaries addressing the subject. Whether they understood "Black English" to be slang or dialect, parents were in agreement that standard English should be taught in the classroom. There was ambivalence regarding Black English use outside the classroom; parents believed that black people should talk like black people--"every group has its own language." On the other hand, the following quotes are indicative of parents' attitudes about Black English in the classroom:

> I don't see no sense in why we can't use (Black English) on ourselves, but you can use it so much our children can have a twelve-year education and go to college and use it too much--he's not going to get a job over the white man. It would be a long time. No, a black man couldn't have a job he could apply for. It doesn't sound right.

> You know I've never really given it a thought....Well, the way I feel is that the teachers should teach what they are taught to teach because a child is going to pick (Black English) up anyway; don't need teachers to teach them that: they need teachers to teach them what they don't know...I think that the teacher should correct the child...If a child goes for a job interview...now I don't care if it's a black or white that's interviewing that child, he ain't gonna get no job. Because, see, mine will pick (Black English) up around me, anyhow. And they'll correct me, and I know (my talk) is wrong, and I know the correct way of talking.

> I think it's (teachers speaking Black English) stupid. When (teachers) teach them that, when they get out of school, they still have to talk to everybody else. And when they go to get a job and (fill out an application) you can't make that in Black English.

> To a degree I think (Black English) should be respected, but by the same token...the kids are not always going to be in the classroom. They're going to broaden--they're going further, and the school that they may go into (later) may not understand the language that they are speaking, so I feel (their talk) should be respected to a degree, but by the same token, they should be taught that there is a way to express themselves other than Black English.

Parents had no problems with Black English from an aesthetic or "ethnic" point of view; they liked the fact that blacks had their own way of speaking. At the same time, as the quotes above demonstrate, they believed that use of standard English was necessary for getting jobs and advancing in the wider society.

READING AND WRITING

Magazines favored by parents were such home-improvement magazines as Apartment Life and Good HOusekeeping as well as black publications: Ebony, Jet, Essence. Other magazines mentioned by parents included Newsweek, Time Cosmopolitan, Playboy, Sports Illustrated, Psychology Today, Ladies Home Journal, and other popular publications.

Publications most obvious to the eye were the home-improvement organs, the black-oriented publications and sports publications--the latter the favored material of boys in the home. Other reading materials on display were encyclopedia, usually World Book or Brittanica, sometimes Childcraft or other children's editions. The above-mentioned materials were commonplace. Several homes of the sixteen or more visited contained bookshelves with a range of reading materials--novels, histories, short story collections, collections of plays, religious materials. Commonly, in addition to the set of encyclopedia, there was a book or two lying about the living room--sometimes children's books or a romantic novel or a collection of plays, the latter of which seemed to be favored by girls in upper primary grades who enjoyed reading. More magazines than daily newspapers were in evidence. Magazines were not necessarily current but looked as if they had been well-handled. My impression was that magazines, once purchased, were not read from cover to cover and put aside, but were "lived with" for a time--picked up and thumbed through at odd moments.

Reading materials for parents and children had been obtained through the follwoing; supermarkets; bargain stores and other general shopping outlets; mail order--popular book clubs or books advertised in a magazine; public and/or school libraries; relatives; hand-me-downs from older children; and trading (books for books). Bookstores as such were not routinely mentioned. Obviously, the expense of purchasing books and magazines was a factor. As one parent said:

> I don't buy magazines any more because they're too expensive for what you get out of them. I used to buy a lot. I remember when you could get ladies' magazines for thirty-five cents. Now, they're a dollar and a half.

She said that she told her children to set their own priorities, based on the allowance they received:

> Like I say, if you want something, it's for your convenience and your pleasure. I feel as though if you want it, you can get it. You can walk right down there to Acme, because they have (books) in there sometimes. And then around here, like the store here on the corner, sometimes they might have books. Then there's a newsstand on the avenue....

Other than expense, the other reason that bookstores were not routinely mentioned was probably that parents tended to select books and magazines on the way to doing something else (including flipping through a television guide) or as part of the experience of general shopping as opposed to "shopping for books." Although there were no bookstores as such in the triangle, there were used books on sale in thrift shops and odds-and-ends shops. The nearest retail bookstore was as close as the nearest public library.

Parents often read materials children brought from school--The Weekly Reader, for instance. One parent of a fourth-grader--an avid reader and top student--said she read all her daughter's books from the library "to see what she's reading."

As many parents said they didn't read well or much at all as said they did. All, however, wanted their children to read well and to read in quantity. With few exceptions, parents said they had been disinterested in school due to "distractions" and were "average" students; those who had dropped out had done so usually to get married and/or to have a child; but all wanted their children to finish high school at the least. Primary among the reasons they gave for wishing they had received more and better education was that they could then have assisted their own children with homework more than they felt they were able. The quote below is eloquent in that respect:

Interviewer:	How about yourself--do you like to read?
Parent:	No. I use me for an example because I'm not a good reader. And I tell them, "Look, you see, I can't help youwhen you need help with your homework. Is that how you want to be when you have kids? I mean, you all sit around and call me..,'w, mama, you dumb', and all this and that." I said, "How would you feel if your child told you that?" I say, "So now you know you got to do better if you want to improve your child." See, I got plans of going back to school myself.

In many instances, then, parents, believing they had short-changed their own academic development, tried to interest their children in doing what they admitted they rarely did--a quantity of reading and writing and study. "Go get a book"--as well-meaning as the intention might be--was often a filler suggestion, used when children wanted to go outside or when they were too much underfoot or had brought home no school work. Parents who had not grown up as readers themselves and had not developed the interest often fell back on the notion that they had to force children to read, a strategy which, according to their recounts of experiences with their own parents, had not worked with them either, as children. More frustration was expressed regarding boys and reading than girls.

The majority of parents had attended inner-city public schools and had graduated from high school. Several had taken some college courses. One father was a college graduate. Reasons given for wanting children to be capable readers and writers included (1) increased job opportunities as adults; (2) ability to read instructions and directions; (3) facility in "getting around the city"; and (4) ability to read signs and notices. It must be understood that the foregoing reasons are based on parents' focusing on the current ages of their children. Parents tended not to speculate about what their children's lives would be like as adults in specific terms--type of job, place of residence, lifestyle. Their attitude was that they wanted the "best", whatever that might be according to the child's eventual definition for him/herself and the opportunities society offered. They were not saying that all they wanted ultimately was that their offspring should be able to "get around the city," etc. Except for wanting good employment opportunities for their children, they tended to focus on the advantages of literacy in terms of immediate or soon-to-be-immediate applications.

Few parents said that they did much writing. Writing, for those who did write, consisted primarily of business and personal letters or, occasionally, diaries. Otherwise, writing was used for notes to teachers, grocery lists and in assisting children with homework.

Parents valued knowing how to write in being able to (1) fill out job applications and other essential forms and applications; (2) communicate in a situation of crisis, when speech wasn't possible (as in illness); (3) communicate when calling on the telephone was not possible or did not produce results; and (4) express oneself. The latter reason was the least-mentioned. A couple of parents expressed that they believed writing well could come naturally if one was a good reader.

Children, according to parents and to the children who were present at the time of the interviews or were present on other occasions--the homes I visited several times--had varied uses for writing. They used writing in play, particularly in "playing school," whether the participants were other children or makeshift playmates, such as dolls who were given assignments. Playing school was widely done, at home as well as in transition moments in school--e.g., after recess before the teacher returned to the room. Types of writing mentioned included poems; short stories; plays; "little notes about myself"; notes to parents (anger or affection notes); letters to relatives; diaries. Children often enjoyed making cartoons--drawings with writing underneath. The samples that were proudly shown were usually the cartoons.

My impression was that voluntary writing was periodic rather than daily.

Some parents claimed that they rarely received notes from school but were called. Others claimed that they received notes. Contents of notes dealt with behavior problems or conferences with the teacher or upcoming meetings or health warnings (measles epidemic, etc.) or special occasions such as trips.

One way parents often became involved with school affairs--volunteering for trips and/or classroom assistance or working as a parent-scholar or working with the parents' advisory group--was that they were summoned by a teacher to discuss a misbehaving child and in the process became interested in observing the classroom and eventually interested in further participation.

Children's homework provided occasion for significant literacy events in the home. Homework was responsible for much of parents' perceptions of the quality and content of the education their children were receiving as well as of their children's abilities to cope with school work. Comments about children's homework were usually specific:

> She wrote six book reports this year.... She has to write just about everyday, especially science.
>
> In the beginning of the year, they put him (in the high achievers' section), and I knew he wasn't supposed to be there, but the homework they gave him, he seemed to do better than the work he does now. He's in a slower section now; he was doing better when he was in the higher section because he seemed to be more interested--he seemed to be determined to do. In the higher section he had homework every night, but he doesn't have it every night now--just stuff he has to get together on Friday. His sister has reports everyday. I think they get enough homework--like spelling words. I know Joyce gets fifteen spelling, while Janice doesn't get any this year. They're supposed to be doing book reports; they get their spelling words on Monday. They have a spelling test on Friday.
>
> My older daughter is learning how to write cursive in school, and the others try to copy.
>
> The only thing I have to help him with is his reading and spelling. The spelling is very poor because he hates to study. For one thing, he doesn't read when he's at home. He's got all kinds of books, but it's hard to get him to study. The only thing he really likes is math and gym; that's all he likes; other than that, you have a problem with him. But any kind of school work with math he'll do.
>
> She loves to read; that's all she'll do, and write. Now she's the type of child, when it comes down to her homework, she does it. But she don't really want to do it. It'll take her three or four hours to do her homework. If she don't have any homework, she'll get into some kind of book--or she'll write a whole story out of a book....If my children's homework is something I don't know anything about, I'll write them a note--please give me an example.

> Billy's weak in math. He's in this fifth-grade class because he can read out-of-sight...but his math is really weak. Billy has missed one thing, and that is multiplication, and I think I'm going to have to be the one who really buckles him down on his multiplication. I told him if you can't add, you can't multiply; if you can't multiply, you can't divide....
>
> You can make Tommy sit and look at a paper two or three hours, he's only going to learn so much. You can sit Walter to the table a half hour, and he'll learn his spelling words just like that....

In addition, schools are compared informally according to the homework a child is receiving--a former school or a school the child of a relative or friend is attending.

> At the other school, the teacher let them do a little more handwriting than giving them all this (ditto) paper and putting it in the book. In the kindergarten they had to really deal with their handwriting.

Children had designated times to do their homework, usually immediately after school. In some homes they were allowed a snack first or were required to perform simple chores. As suggested in a quote above, depending on the child, the doing of homework might become an all-evening task or might consume only minutes' time.

Although this study can provide nothing conclusive about the home environment and achievement or about the factors that caused one child of a family to be an achiever academically and the other(s) not to be, given apparently similar abilities, a complex of factors are suggested by the interviews and observations, including a parent's manner of dealing with one child as opposed to another--e.g., firstborn; temperament of child; marital circumstances--as well as the parents' abilities to assist children in substantive ways to translate a desire that was mutually felt (parents wanted their children to read and write well; children wanted to read and write well) into everyday practices. Parents of achieveing children tended to be more interested than parents of non-achieving children in trends and issues outside the home, whether they read or not. They were more likely to be present at neighborhood meetings, to know who key persons were by name or acquaintance ship and to be vocal about what they felt was amiss or not so in matters affecting the home--management of projects, behavior of local politicians, quality of merchant delivery on the avenue. They seemed more able than parents of non-achieving children to make the concerns of the world outside the home felt within the home. A third factor is that parents of achieving children communicated to their children that they were capable of achieving and were expected to do so.

IV. READING AND WRITING AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

In my conversations with community heads of organizations, pastors, small businesspersons and residents encountered casually--laundramat, restaurant, recreation center--there was always mentioned a "something else" that was seen to be essential before children could learn to read and write. The extra something took several forms, all related to the child's response to the learning environment and, by implication, perception of self. For one person, the key was "moral excellence"; reading and writing were important, but training in values--respect for one another, proper dress, respect for property, politeness towards adults, practice of religious faith--was presumed to be the prerequisite; in that view, expressed in various ways by others, instruction wasn't likely to be successful unless the values sensitivity had been instilled, at which point reading and writing and study would flow as a natural enhancement.

Others mentioned discipline, in much the same way as parents. One organization head said that the "only way to teach black children effectively is through a strict approach." He expressed that children were accustomed to freedom, which made them "exceptionally creative" but made it difficult for them to channel their creativity constructively, as they lacked "discipline and restraint." He felt also that values teaching must accompany other instruction but emphasized discipline as partner to concentration--"Reading and writing require a lot of discipline"--rather than as corollary to "manners" --"niceness and sitting up straight." A pastor, who was active in community affairs, expressed that overcoming disciplinary problems was the "key to getting down to basics." Similar sentiments were expressed by residents remembering the "strict and honorable" principal who was the first black principal at Harriet Tubman.

One person, an advocate of improved opportunities for children to participate in organized sports, expressed that he believed it would be a serious mistake to downplay or neglect sports activities because of anxiety about reading and writing competencies: "If a child is coachable, he is teachable." The emphasis again was on children's acquiring a form of discipline that could transfer into other learning environments.

The word "discipline" was used interchangeably to refer both to ability to concentrate meaningly on the task at hand and to the curbing of rambunctious behavior. The order that was implied was that the latter disciplining was necessary before the former type of discipline could be achieved.

There were varied expressions of people's concerns about literacy and the young. At an open political rally, at which a mayoral candidate promised to "get rid of bums and get teachers" because the district's high schools graduated "functional illiterates", the audience applauded enthusiastically; and it was the only statement made by him that evening which drew applause. Pastors all asked if I knew of tutors; tutorial programs had a brief life because volunteer tutors often were not available. A home-made sign in the window of a "flat house" (low rise) in the projects asked for books to be donated so that a library could be set up in the community center that served the projects. Several men who frequented the grounds of one of the recreation centers wanted to set up a small library inside the center; the project, however, never got off the ground. A quick way to get a positive response from residents was to assert an interest in helping young people with reading and writing. Several neighborhood institutions offered space for such an undertaking. Both factions of a resident community organization were anxious to claim credit for interest in upgrading the skills of the youth of the area.

Community persons, as well as parents, always emphasized the practical applications of reading and writing and study. "People (adults want to be able to pass tests, get their G.E.D., something they can see--get jobs." Another: "It's essential that children be taught in preparation for the real world, which makes certain demands, whether you want them or not. It's not what you want to do but what you have to do." Some statements were unconditional: "If you can't read, you're nothing," Again: "The survival of blacks depends on education".

It was considered dangerous, however, to be "too smart" if one wasn't also knowing about one's circumstances; it was dangerous to become too abstract in one's thinking or idealistic. Teachers, parents and residents told me stories about children who had been achievers in school but had not been able to blend their visions of what should have been with what was. Such children, as the stories went, became addicts or bums or mental patients. Regardless as to school achievement, the children who "made it" were supposedly the ones who learned to analyze their surroundings--people and circumstances--and maneuver accordingly, to their own best advantage.

STRUCTURE AND TONE

Whether the meetings I observed were religious, pastoral or community-action, there was serious concern about procedure. Parliamentary procedure was, in most instances, the point of departure in intent, whether it was actually practiced or not. There was always a structure, even if just "old business" and "new business" and "reports;" and if a matter was mentioned at the wrong time, the individual would be remined that "old business" was still being addressed, or the like. Every meeting had a secretary who read aloud minutes of the last meeting or had minutes on hand to be read. When order was conceived to be lacking, there was someone or ones to remind individuals privately that the fault lay in the failure of the group to follow procedure. In one meeting, the chairman followed procedure to the point of, the members felt, squelching expression and dissent. In that instance, the members, none of whom were younger than thirty years of age, responded in much the same way youngsters might have in a classroom headed by an authoritarian teacher. There were jokes and guarded laughter and derogatory asides. The chairman chided one member for getting up to leave the room, without having requested and received the permission of the chair. In another instance, the participants in a sports meeting shouted and interrupted one another. Although I was not actually present in the room, the noise level was high that anyone on the floor could have heard, After the meeting, disgruntled members complained that nothing had been accomplished, One especially vocal member told the chiarman that if parliamentary procedure were followed, the meetings would become ordered so that business could be accomplished. He also held up a sports rules book and expressed that certain issues would not arise if the book were referred to and studied. The tone of the business part of meetings I attended was always serious; individuals addressed one another respectfully; dissent did not usually find open expression of the floor regardless as to participants' private feelings. In one instance, the chairman addressed for the better part of the meeting a subject that no one else appeared to be interested in, as there were no advocacy comments, only politely phrased reservations, poker-faced silences and grumbling asides made to companions. No closure was achieved regarding the issue; the time became late, and the matter was put aside for other matters. At another community meeting, residents made faces covertly, grunted and spoke in undertones of disparagement when a political figure made a presentation. Although members had appeared, prior to the meeting, to be ready to lock horns with the presenter, open comments were polite, even at times complimentary.

Structure and order were appreciated by residents as being desirables, as the only way of handling an occasion, whether the results were exactly to their liking or not: whether they accomplished what they wanted to accomplish. The two instances I encountered wherein order of procedure was subverted--the sports league meetings and, through the account of a member, the gardening association--the stated goals were achieved as least as visibly as in other community efforts. In fact, order sometimes prevented action, especially the action of dissent, by preventing issues from being aired.

Structured and controlled proceedings were appreciated in every established community context I encountered, whether educational or religious or recreational or civic. The head of a recreation center proudly asserted that children did not "run in and out" of the building and that there was no room available in the building for unsupervised activities. My observations supported his claim. A church hall had been closed for indoor sports use because the children who used it had not been "properly supervised."

OBSERVATIONS WITHIN A CHURCH

The church that I selected for observations was one of a few churches in the triangle with a dependable core of youth participation. Children from Harriet Tubman were active in many of its programs, particularly special programs; children were drawn more readily from the neighborhood for such special events as a block party sponsored by the church than for regular Sunday-school attendance.

In the Sunday-school class for children of pre-reading ages, the teacher asked preparatory questions about the lesson: "What does it mean to be blind" then read the text aloud. Afterwards teacher and children discussed the pictures, and she repeated the question, "What does it mean to be blind?" Then she asked, "Have you ever seen a blind person?" "Haven't you seen a person with a dog in a harness, waiting to cross the street," and the like. "Close your eyes and pretend you're blind." After the lesson, the children colored pictures related to the story.

For children, aged seven to nine, the Sunday-school materials consisted of workbooks that featured text followed by tests: letters to be unscrambled, true and false exercises, underlining of correct answers, filling in of blanks and yes/no-answer questions. The children read the text silently and discussion followed. The teacher examined the children's answers and encouraged them to re-read the materials aloud, in order to find the correct answers. Then the teacher asked comprehension questions as well as such questions as, "How did the man feel? How did the people feel?"

The format of Sunday-school literature for adults was as follows: appropriate Bible references; paraphrase and/or summary of biblical materials; discussion; and questions for ciritical thinking. Church leaders promoted "study and research" as opposed to intuitive spirituality. The pastor called it "study as opposed to insight." The Sunday-school teacher said to his adult class, "The only way to grow in Chirst is by prayer and study. We must study."

Study was also stressed by the leader/teacher of a class of persons in a church training institute, with a touch of humor: "The Lord called me to give me my message. But you got to go further than that today." As part of requirements, students wrote research papers.

Church leaders were sensitive about the impact of the literature they used in Sunday-school classes for children and adults. There was an issue as to whether the national church literature should be used or commercially prepared church-school literature. National church materials were thought to be provincial, not speaking to a variety of situations and lifestyles. On the other hand, other literature had to be adapted for the sake of practical application. During a summer church-school convention that included members from a number of churches in the district, materials were discussed. One suggestion was that individual churches might purchase parts of sets of materials to supplement what was being used. Programmed materials were discussed as a possiblity "so that the leader knows something different to do each Sunday."

The instructional approach generally was that the leader of the Sunday-school class followed the plan of the day's passage, then at the conclusion of the lesson created examples from everyday life to support the message and make its impact one that would be relevant within the context of the members' lives.

As the pastor stated, what the church needed was "literature all children can identify with" and "clarity in message and application."

In the interest of clarity, the minister used several versions of the Bible in teaching the weekday, adult Bible class. Members read a passage in the various translations before discussing the meaning and relevance. Misreadings or mispronunciations were ignored unless they were flagrant, in which case the word or phrase was supplied by the pastor or someone else. The pastor advised members to "Get a Living Bible because the language is so much clearer--you can get a clearer understanding of what the Bible is about. But keep the King James Version for the poetry."

The pastor led the meetings. As in adult church-school meetings, which were taught by someone other than the pastor, members voluntarily responded to questions or participated in other ways (prayer, songs, readings) although it was occasionally the practice of the leader to single out a member for participation: "Mrs. _______, we haven't heard from you this morning."

In the course of the presentation/discussion, the minister asked the difference between "opinion and judgment" and between the "perfect and the permissive" will of God, In response to the passage, "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1,2), the minister asked one of several rhetorical questions, "What profits the Jew over other nations?" and answered, "The Jew has the Word." A second rhetorical question was, "How many love their neighbors as themselves?" followed by examples of what loving oneself and not loving oneself means--his own overeating as not loving himself; a man's being "drunk as a snake" as not being self-loving. At the end of the lesson the pastor spoke of the "commonality of all religions" in that "all have the golden rule."

The pastor had advanced theology degrees and was self-consciously concerned about not speaking too abstractly or theoretically from the pulpit and in classes. He expressed to me that he tried at the beginning of his sermons to present ideas in a way that would appeal to the more educated members and then to become specific in practical ways at the end of the sermon. He spoke jokingly of times that he had "gotten too far out there and couldn't get back" in time to close the sermon on the note he preferred. He said that he geared his sermons to a fourth-grade reading level, though by that he said he meant "vocabulary and not ideas."

There was recognition within the church that some members' reading was not as fluent as could be desired. In a gathering of pastors, it was agreed that laymen sometimes had difficulty reading a scriptural passage handed to them cold and that persons selected for readings at an upcoming occasion should be given the passages in time to practice reading so that the event would progress smoothly and no one would suffer embarrassment, Church announcements were always read from the pulpit by a layman although the material appeared on the mimeographed order of the service that each person held. The reading acknowledged that many might neglect to read the material and served as well to support the performance uses of reading, as will be discussed in the Summary. From the pulpit the pastor announced one Sunday that a certain member had become a deacon, having passed the training courses as well as the written and oral exams. "We all knew him," said the pastor, "when he could hardly read the Decalogue."

At the assembly following the meeting of Sunday-school classes, the pastor complimented the children on having found the Books of the Bible quickly as he had called them otu, then complimented the children on their "good ability to read."

The pastor used multi-syllabic words, along with synonyms--"reiterate, repeat, say again"--or a definition, "You don't need to editorialize--you don't need to say anything." Also, he used slang expressions or Black English at times to undercut his own knowledge and/or use of words, sometimes betraying a self-consciousness not so much helpful to listeners as demonstrating his anxiety about seeming learned: "...biologically, anthropologically--all them things," or "You may not have studied Greek and all that stuff--those of us who studied it have forgotten it..." Or in a sermon he might preface a reference by saying, "There was a fellow named Bonhoeffer who said...."

The conclusions of his sermons were done in the repetitious, elaborate, half-chanting style that is a trademark of the black preacher. In view of the pastor's comments about becoming practical and concrete at the conclusion of the sermon, it seems reasonable to question whether the intention behind repetition, in the minds of those who engage in it, is not so much to be poetic as to establish or ensure clarity.

Summer Bible school was taught by a member/teacher from the public schools, though not from Harriet Tubman. Children were divided into classes based on age groupings, as in Sunday school, and the teacher presented a lesson to be read aloud by the children or by herself, depending on the age of the children, followed by questions and comments. Afterwards there was a period for songs and instruments--bells and sticks and tambourines--and for art and special projects. ehe attitude towards and handling of children's behavior was much the same as traditionally in public schools: "I called on you to receive an instrument because you're sitting quietly" with perhaps an adaptation, as in the following: "You are the light of the world--what that means is that the way you behave shows what kind of person you are."

More of the children were from the immediate neighborhood than the usual Sunday-school population. Teachers were more likely to be non-residents of the community than were counselors, who were residents.

Young children performed set writing tasks, as in a take-home letter to mothers: "God loves you and so does (child's name)." Teachers or counselors did the writing for children who were having difficulty. Closing day activities consisted mainly of readings (roughly 85 per cent)--Bible passages and materials from church literature. The pre-teens told Bible stories and gave interpretations of the stories. Children held posters with written messages and illustrations--presentations, except for content, much like many of the presentations made on assembly days by children at Harriet Tubman.

The devotional segment of the church-school convention, which was attended by representatives of churches in the district, featured songs and reading aloud of Scriptures by children. When volunteers to "speak for the Lord" were requested, young and old recited Bible verses from memory. In other church assemblies, a call for such a witness typically drew a like response: the recitation of Bible verses.

A significant feature of the convention was the selection of a Youth of the Year from among the churches present. There were two contestants, both teen-aged girls. Selection was based on the following: (1) answers to questions about the church (written exam)--50 per cent weight; (2) resume written by contestant, providing evidence of contributions to church, school and community--25 per cent; and (3) talent presentation--25 per cent. As talent presentation, one contestant sang a capella, and the other read a paper she had written. The young woman who read the paper was the contest winner.

Constituents of varying bodies--religious, civic and recreational--valued written accounts, whether letters or other documents, for substantiation, clarification and validation of procedures. Minutes of the meeting were essential routinely. Other examples include the following:

The constitution of an organized body had been revised by a committee, which then presented the changes before the full assembly for approval. The designated committee member began reading the suggested changes and was interrupted by a member who objected that there were no copies available for members to have in hand during the reading. The comment was that the revision was "too important to be read rote as if we're in school." After somewhat heated discussion, the decision was made that the matter should be set aside until the committee could provide copies of both the original and revised versions for consideration.

A written proposal for funds was a factor of contention in another setting. Regardless as to assurances of the content of the proposal by members who had submitted it years earlier, much suspicion was engendered among a segment of the membership because the actual papers were not available for examination. The nonavailability of the papers was interpreted as avoidance by the newer members whereas the others felt that a verbal presentation should have been sufficient. The withholding of the document as well as the insistence upon seeing it were evidences of the significance of the written materials for both factions.

A civic organization sent out flyers to announce date and location of meetings. On two occasions the information on the flyers was in contradiction to the verbal announcements made at the prior meetings. Although, on both occasions, persons who tried to attend had missed the meetings or nearly missed them because no notice had been posted on the door of the old location and those persons had neglected to read the flyer, the officers defended themselves by insisting that the flyers represented sufficient notice, whether read or not.

An organization's membership voted whether to send a letter or make a telephone call to an elected official. The majority voted in favor of the letter. Letters sent out from the body were read to the membership by officers, as well as letters received. Regarding the appropriateness of calls and letters, when the issue arose, consensus among members in the meetings I attended was that the most thorough way to proceed was to do both: call and write. Calling was a last-minute reminder or a warm-up act for the official act (the letter) which was to follow. Residents produced letters as proof regarding matters considered too important to be without written verification: e.g., a request for improvements to be made on the grounds of a recreation center as well as the official response; a series of letters retained over the years as proof of official city responses during changing administrations to a proposal for housing rehabilitation; the text of an open letter, read aloud at a meeting because the contents were considered too sensitive to be accounted for extemporaneously, announcing a membership split.

CONCLUSION

Rather than findings, I would suggest that the foregoing study has identified certain themes prevalent in the community, as I encountered it, concerning home, school, community, education and literacy. These themes include the following:

(1) consciousness of and response to tradition;

(2) belief that there are forces within the community that, if not kept under strict control, would act to prevent progress or disrupt what has been achieved;

(3) belief that formal education generally and attainment of literacy specifically are essential preparations for economic or job mobility, in conjunction with uncertainty about specific measures in home and community that would ensure realization of the goal;

(4) appreciation for a structured learning environment;

(5) instructional and organizational processes that feature a dominant, often authoritarian, figure;

(6) reference to a code of behavior of some type as an enabling factor in accomplishing organizational and instructional goals;

(7) skepticism at worst and a crossed-fingers-attitude at best about the likelihood of improvement of the immediate community environment--places and people and processes--as an outcome to be effected by the resident population;

(8) sense of insecurity regarding the survival of the community in its present character, racial and otherwise, even granted initiatives of the resident population;

(9) belief that community literacy levels are inadequate for what is needed by people for economic well-being in the society;

(10) anxiety about confrontation--avoiding it, meeting it, controlling it--together with the belief that the threat of confrontation is ever-immediate;

(11) conviction that a better life is possible and will somehow occur for oneself in time, in conjunction with lack of belief that one's neighbors will improve their lot;

(12) distrust for non-traditional instructional environments for children, seen as being ploys to prevent people from achieving benefits available to persons in the dominant society, in favor of emphasis on the "basics"--traditional studies taught in a traditional manner in a traditional environment:

(13) conviction that parents share responsibility for children's education--in large part a matter of enforcement of behavior attributes so that instruction can proceed smoothly;

(14) perception by parents of involvement in school as being a matter of maintaining communication with individuals, primarily teachers, and providing support for school activities--e.g., assistance in classroom and accompanying children on trips--rather than as participation in groups organized for collective action;

(15) perception by parents of children's time at home and in the community in terms of constraint--preventing them through force of parental authority and values training from causing harm to others or being harmed--rather than through planned, specific activities.

Parents look to school personnel to provide means for their children to acquire the benefits of the "tradition of excellence", as promoted by the school. That education, parents hope--combining social and academic attributes--will lead the way for their young to enter adult society armed with advantages they, as parents, did not have, either for reason of lack of availability or their own negligence. As such, parents do not focus upon the immediate community and its leadership or residents as models in any collective sense for what they would want their children prepared to inherit; in other words, schooling is intended to lead the way to a different--

and by implication, superior, though not described in specific terms--community than that the children are experiencing. .

The school in its placement in the community--for those who relate to it by virtue of having attended themselves or by virtue of having children in attendance or by reason of employment, present or past, and for those few individuals who maintain involvement in school matters because their children at one time attended--is intended to provide a ticket to a life better than that represented by the surrounding community, particularly that aspect represented by the projects, from which at least half the children are drawn. Children then are urged, in one way or the other, to turn their sights higher than the environment they and their parents inhabit while, in fact, that environment is the one which represents the reality they know.

The geographical boundaries described in the section "Community Boundaries and Overview" have served simply as a convenient reference point for a beginning for the study. My observations support the fact the "community" does not exist in the sense of there being identifiable and interdependent connections among institutions, residents, organizations or otherwise that would give reason to label the boundaries as described as a community separate from surrounding neighborhoods. In fact, there are "communities" within the boundaries noted as well as "communities" that overlap those boundaries and extend into others. For example, the projects straddle several school boundary limits, each of which can be considered for convenience, as well as because of the experiences centered around a school itself, to be a community. The projects in themselves form a most obviously identifiable community, for project residents as well as outsiders. In addition, at another point of the triangle, a housing project of a different order and residency is located. Linkage made by an outsider between those projects and the other could only be arbitrary. Community geographically is whatever it needs to be according to the reference point of the speaker at the moment. For purposes of gaining outside funds, a group may adopt city definitions according to census tract, voting districts or whatever. In the case study noted, the city's definition for the purpose of community assistance forced residents who had their own organization based on block upkeep to expand their definition for the purposes at hand although the old definition remained in force. Residents hold many overlapping "communities" in mind to be asserted according to appropriateness.

ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING
PROJECT: FINAL REPORT
VOLUME II

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THE SHORTRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Eli Anderson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I
I. Mode of Inquiry
II. Development of Relationships with Schools
III. School Leaders as Participants in Research
IV. Individual Reports
  A. Harriet Tubman School: Community Perspectives (Davis)

VOLUME II
  B. Shortridge School and Community: Portrait of the Principal (Anderson)
  C. Shortridge School and Community: Teacher-Parent Relationships (Watkins)
  D. Shortridge School and Community: Attitudes and Admission to Literacy (Gilmore)
  E. Shortridge School and Community: Boy's Verbal Abilities (Lussier)
  F. Spaulding School: Attention and Styles of Interaction (May)

VOLUME III
  G. Commodore School: Teaching Writing: One Teacher's Experience (Woods-Elliot)
  H. Commodore School: Unofficial Writing (Fiering)
V. General Findings (Smith)
VI. Ethnographic Monitoring: A Way to Understanding By Those Who Are Making Schooling Work

THE SHORTRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

The social science life-history approach has a long and distinguished past. Scholars such as W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (1918), John Dollard (1932), and Clyde Kluckholm (1943) made important use of this methodology in the generation of now-classic statements of sociology and anthropology. In their works, the particular subjects "own story" serves to introduce the reader to a novel social world about which erroneous presuppositions and assumptions are likely to be generally held.

The goal here is to develop a "life history" of Mr. Bud Simone, the principal of Shortridge elementary school for the past twelve years. It is to be personal document in which I attempt to record Mr. Simone's "own story" of his involvement in the school and its local community. My intent is to gain the principal's account, his personal rendering of the social organization of his school. Over the past year, I've been meeting occasionally with Mr. Simone for discussions concerning his role at the school and in the community, and I've visited Shortridge on occasions to observe him in action. Also, I've been conducting an ethnographic survey of the local community in an effort to convey some sense of the social context in which Mr. Simone's story takes place. The hope is that together with such contextual information, Mr. Simones's own story will provide insights into the principal's role in the functioning of one all-black "inner-city" school, including his relationships with faculty, staff, parents, and students. Because so very little is really known about all-black "inner-city" schools, Mr. Simone's personal account of his experience at his own school may be especially valuable data from which we might be able to gain greater knowledge and understanding of such social settings in particular and of urban education in general.

The Community

The Shortridge elementary school community has undergone significant transition during the past decade. In 1970, the local community of the school was predominantly Jewish working- to middle-class, mixed with a good number of Irish, Scotch-Irish, and Italian working- to middle-class people. Today, this area is predominantly black working-class to poor, with a sprinkling of middle-class black people. The local institutions and community ambiance have been much affected by these social changes of the past decade.

It was more than a decade ago that blacks began moving into the local area. The first blacks to arrive were not poor, but were solidly working- to middle-class. Many of these blacks attempted and succeeded in getting along with their white neighbors, some of whom were socially liberal. Interracial friendships and block associations arose, and a sense of community prevailed. At this time, though, there was "an absense of total harmony" in relations between and among the respective racial and ethnic groups represented in the community, as one informant told me. As more blacks moved in, this situation became increasingly complex. It was this complexity mixed with race prejudice that encouraged many of the whites, and some blacks, to view the area as undesirable and to flee.

As blacks moved into the residential area in slight but increasing numbers, many Jews, the most financially well-off and organized group of the community, collectively decided to leave. It is said that they "left in droves," leaving pockets of vacant residences, businesses, and a synagogue, which has since been sold to blacks who now use it as a Baptist church. It appears to have been a classic case of what Park and Burgess defined as the "invasion-succession" process (See Park, 1925).

The local real estate concerns exploited the situation of vacant, "undesirable," and relatively cheap housing. It was in these circumstances that a low-income black population began gravitating to the area in large numbers. This influx helped many whites to make up their minds to leave the area, even to justify their actions.

As large numbers of whites moved out of the Shortridge area, many blacks moved in. With this major exchange of residents, the residential area became further redefined. It was at this time that the class and racial character of the community was significantly altered. The community was in an apparent state of transition from a diverse, relatively stable white ethnic neighborhood to a relatively homogeneous black area, though black class orientations varied. As great numbers of middle-income people left, the ethnic working-class whites were left to fight it out with the blacks, people whom they increasingly viewed and defined as invaders. The remaining whites, rather than move completely out of of the general area, simply picked up and moved over, once, again, and again, slowly succumbing to the pressure of the growing black, and increasingly poor, presence in the area. As the black population expanded, its boundaries grew incrementally, pushing the whites further to the south and west. Through this process, the "black" and "white" areas of the community became more clearly defined.

Many of the black middle-income residents who preceded the great influx of the black poor are said to have remained in the community, though some supposedly have moveed to Neadon, a "well-to-do integrated" area about a mile north of Shortridge school. Some of those middle-income blacks who did remain in the Shortridge community assumed leadership positions in the churches and in community-school activities, as told to me by an informant.

While the area surrounding Shortridge elementary school became almost completely black, territorial rights and privileges were by no means settled by simple residential occupation. Rather, disputes over such rights have been difficult to resolve and are being worked at continually and tentatively settled to this day through informal social negotiation, including occasional skirmishes between black and white youths. For instance, fights sometimes occur between blacks attending predominantly black Martrap high school, which is located in a predominantly white neighborhood, and white students attending predominantly white East Catholic high school, which is located in a predominantly black neighborhood.

While residential patterns and neighborhood boundaries have been established over time, there exists only a cautious racial peace and harmony, particularly among the youth. Every spring brings forth racial conflict over turf rights of respective groups. Apparently, as the seasons change from cold to mild, and as more people, especially youth, are out-of-doors or on the streets making contact, turf and street passage rights once again become at issue, and must be renegotiated, reappreciated, and reestablished. After initial skirmishes, which usually occur during the first warm days of the year, relations tend to settle down, thus reminding and informing the general community that at least some residents are still vigilant about defending certain turf boundaries, the fighting lull of the winter notwithstanding. For example, there were sniping deaths and injuries during the early spring of 1980, but as time passed such conflicts stopped or occurred infrequently for the duration of the warm weather season.

Such incidents not only define and help to clarify neighborhood boundaries, but also they appear to upset the general community, generating a certain tenseness and awareness of things racial among both blacks and whites. Such incidents emphasize the category of race, thus tending to heighten the sense of group position among individuals (See Blumer, 1958). In these circumstances, residents are likely to check themselves, inspecting behavior of others, as well as themselves, for propriety with regard to a supposed racial etiquette. It may be that such concerns find their way into the various schools of the area, including Shortridge elementary. This is suggested in the following note:

> On a Wednesday afternoon as school was letting out, I had just finished a session with Mr. Simone. I thought I would just hang around the halls to observe the process. Right before the children were dismissed, the teachers had them line up against the stairway railings to wait for the bell. While waiting for the bell, I was struck by the presence of so many parents, particularly fathers, at the school ostensibly to meet their children. I presumed they were there to provide them transportation home. While this may have been a prime reason for some of the parents, it wasn't true for all, as a surprising number appeared to be on foot. One man told me: "I come to pick up my daughter because of the racial trouble in the area, just to be safe. I just don't want her to get caught up in the middle of something, you know. They've been having trouble with these gangs (of white youths), and so I'm keeping an eye out myself." I then asked another parent, and he gave a similar response.

Such concerns with race may also be expressed in the ways teachers or staff treat students in their charge. For instance:

> On a Wednesday at noon, my 15 month-old daughter, Caitlin, and I sat in the lunchroom of Shortridge school observing the activity there. Caitlin sat in her stroller, busying herself with a toy, and I sat on the edge of a long bench among some of the children. The room smelled of baloney sandwiches, fruit, and about 100 restless children waiting to be fed. A large black man of 30 ("from the community") served as lunch room monitor. It was his job to coordinate the use of seating space and eating times for the various grades. He stood and directed the children with the aid of a microphone located on a table near the door. Most eyes were on him, though a few children were unattentive. Suddenly, the man turned away from the mike and, with the shrill voice of a drill sergeant, yelled at a little boy, "Hey, what do you think you're doing!? Come back here! Get in line! Where you think you at?! Home?! Now, get back in line and ack like you got some sense!" The little boy cowered and slunk back in line. The man simply glared.

While such liberties of correction may be taken for granted by a black teacher or staff member, it strikes me that a white teacher or staff member in this school would be relatively constrained and circumspect in the handling of children. The difference probably has more than a little to do with the composition of the local community and the nature of the self-confidence among staff that such composition inspires. While the black staff member can be relatively sure of himself--that his actions will be understood--the white staff member can not afford to act so bold, particularly in the volatile Shortridge community. The implication of this is that the teacher is something other than teacher qua teacher, or the principal something other than principal qua principal. In this community and school context, teachers and staff become differentiated on the basis of race. Because of the tension within the general community, skin color is likely to be a "master-status" determining characteristic, nullifying or seriously affecting the social interpretation of other attributes of the person (See Hughes, 1949).

Apart from the general community problems of racial conflict generated by the transition from white to black, local social problems of racial segregation, poverty and crime also beset the Shortridge community.

As one walks around the community area, as I have done on numerous occasions with my daughter Caitlin, he gains the easy impression that the area is segregated. Virtually everyone one-encounters on the streets is black. Black children play on the playground of the school. A black postman delivers the mail. Black women talk and socialize over their porches. Two black crossing guards stand on the corner about a block from the school, socializing and waiting for their charges to be dismissed for lunch. Black boys travel in groups of three to five along the streets, patrolling them and, with their hands balled in fists, daring strangers to start something. The actual street scenes are evocative of a black ghetto.

Consistent with the ghetto view, on these streets, the whites one encounters tend to be in some official capacity or service role. For instance, it is not unusual to see white policemen, white school personel, white commercial delivery men, or even a few white proprietors of local businesses. It is only when one approaches Chester Avenue, a neutral area, that whites seem to appear as residents or as casual users of public space.

Further, as one walks around the community of Shortridge, he is struck by the neighborhood blight. Many of the houses of the area, not old by Philadelphia standards, appear old and dilapidated. Once-elegant triplexes are often found vacant, falling down, in a general state of decay, their window openings now covered with galvanized tin or plywood, their roofs and porches often overgrown with foliage. Interestingly, such houses often come in clusters, forming interstitial blighted areas; they are spotted now and again, and if one is driving they could be focussed on or missed altogether, but they figure in the definition of the neighborhood. For example, a slightly burned, inhabited rowhouse has been left unrepaired, and by now the damage has spread. The houses on either side are in great need of paint, roof-work, and replacement windows. At the same house, it is clear that attention has been given to the yard; the hedges are well trimmed, the yard is well-cut.

This situation is in stark contrast to three or four freshly-painted houses down or across the street; such houses come in clusters, too, seeming to influence one another. A few houses have fancy redwood or pine facades with large picture windows, going against the style of others in the row, indicative of a certain financial and social diversity within the area. In front of such houses, there may be a new Cadillac, a late-model Buick 225, cars which stand in contrast to numerous old junkers that sometimes don't move from their spots for long periods.

As the major residential transition from white to black, from solidly working-class to predominantly poor has continued, crimes of property and violence have become more prevalent. Strikingly, such crime, along with racial prejudice toward the incoming blacks, gave many white residents and businessmen incentive to leave the community. The general crime problem has had some effect upon the conduct of business in the area. For instance, about five years ago, the white proprietor of the deli located across the street from Shortridge school was robbed and killed in an exchange of gunfire with his assailants. The news of this incident reverberated throughout the community, causing many residents, perhaps especially the whites, to reconsider their presence in the area. Some proprietors simply became fearful of the community and took safety precautions against crime. For example, as a measure for self-protection, many encased themselves and their goods in plexiglas, allowing their customers only limited freedom within the stores. The following note illustrates the situation:

> On a Wednesday in March at about 2PM, Caitlin and I entered a drugstore about a block from Shortridge school. A woman customer held the door for us, since I was pushing Caitlin in her stroller. Upon entering, we encountered a line of five black people standing in an area of about 10' X 5', waiting to be waited on by a young white man standing behind the counter. Behind the counter person was the pharmacist busily filling prescriptions. In the waiting area were two racks of newspapers and one rack of occasional cards. Virtually every other item for sale was behind plexiglas barrier. We joined the line. Communication and interaction appeared instrumental. With a deadpan and distant look, the young man waited on person after person, apparently concerned to do no more than his job. The customers seemed to reciprocate, asking for just what they wanted, and leaving, showing very little involvement in the relationship between themselves and person behind the counter. For about ten to fifteen minutes, Caitlin and I patiently waited for our turn, asked for the Q-Tips, paid for them, received them, and left.

The people of the store appeared to accept this arrangement without question or comment. This is the way it is. It may be that the clientele accept the situation because it makes sense to them: It is somehow right for white proprietors to display noninvolvement or distrust for customers, given the crime in the community. The customers have gone through a social learning process concerning crime similar to that of the proprietor, perhaps even sharing similar perceptions of the problem. And hence, no elaborate justification is needed; they can "understand" his distrust of "strangers."

But this situation is in marked contrast to the situation now-prevailing at the deli, in which the former white proprietor was shot and killed. Of course, the situation is different. Not only is the new proprietor black, but there is doubtless a fundamental difference between selling drugs and selling food. Yet the situation is instructive for a perspective of race relations in the Shortridge area.

The deli across from Shortridge school is now run by Tom Mercer, who took over the store approximately a year after the white proprietor was killed. Tom is a very friendly and affable person who gets along well almost everyone of the local community. His clientele includes the teachers and staff from the school, whom he knows by name, as well as the children of the school and the community. Many of the students stop by the deli before or after school to buy cookies, soft drinks, candy, and sandwiches. They also come to the store to do light grocery shopping for their homes. Tom has lived in the community for a long while, and knows most of the children by first names. And he knows many of the parents. The children know him as Mr. Mercer, as he takes a personal interest in the children. It is not unusual to see Tom verbally chastise children for being late for school, and at times he will "run them out the store." The ambiance of the deli is presented in the following note.

> Caitlin and I arrived at the deli around noon. As we entered, Tom greeted us, "Hey, Eli. How you doing." I returned his greeting. Then he turned and bent over and said, "Hi Caty. How are you?!" He tried to play with her but she withdrew. Tom is a large man, and he might have frightened her. Soon he was off to wait on someone, as this was a busy time of the day for him. There was a steady flow of people entering and leaving the store. Children, grown-ups, parents of Shortridge students, students of Shortridge. All were certainly welcome, and they knew it. Tom was happy to have them there, and he expressed this in his interactions with everyone. People talked, smiled and generally took the run of the place. Only the smallest items and the food to be cooked was kept behind the counter. At the counter now, Tom was waiting on a boy of about six, "What else you want?" asked Tom. "A loaf of bread," answered the boy. "O.K., that comes to $2.35," says Tom. The boy then opened his hand, showing two one dollar bills. "That all Edna gave you?!" he asked, in an accusatory tone of voice. "Yup, that's all she had," answered the boy. "O.K.," said Tom, "tell her she owe me 35 cents." Tom then handed over the bread and other food, but just before the boy left the store, he said, "Hey wait! C'mere!" The boy walked back dutifully. Then Tom stooped and began buttoning up the boy's coat, shaking his head from side to side, as if to say, "What would you do without me here." After Tom buttoned up the boy's coat, the boy simply left without saying "thank you." Tom then returned to his work. After about a half hour of this, Tom came over to our table and sat down. We talked for about 15 minutes, then Caitlin and I left.

While there are many middle-income blacks residing within the general community, there are pockets of poverty, where high rates of youth unemployment prevail, leaving many without a socially acceptable means of acquiring money. For those youth who are most hopeless about their situation, street crime may provide momentary solutions to their financial problems. When many community residents observe the youth standing on the corner, they "know just what they are up to"--"they just be waiting to rip somebody off." It is not difficult for community residents to make a connection between street crime and "idle young boys" on the street corner, for this proposition seems to be common knowledge of the community.

Such an understanding of the community makes residents acutely aware of the youth and their situations. Many residents know the youth so well that they know to distrust them, even to fear them as they pass on the street. There seems to be an extraordinary amount of generalized fear toward black males, especially strangers. This concern about black male strangers doubtless finds its way into the schools. The following impressionistic account indicates this concern:

> On a warm and overcast October morning at about 10:30, I arrived at Shortridge to interview Mr. Simone. It was early in the project, and the school staff was not yet familiar with me. I parked in front of deli across from the school. It had rained earlier, and the pavement was now beginning to dry. Upon entering the school door, I encountered two middle-aged black women seated at a desk. They were hall guards, community residents or parents employed by the school. As we met, they cautiously looked me over, not knowing fully whether to stop me or to defer. I spoke first, thus breaking the ice and gaining license to continue. They returned my greeting with blank stares. I then approached their desk and signed in. They were quite distant and unfriendly. They seemed relieved when I moved on towards the principal's office. As time passed, say about a month, as I became more familiar to the women, they warmed up to me.

Apart from internal problems, the community certainly faces external ones. Again, probably the most significant problem is that of race relations with the adjacent white working-class communities. Many black residents have the sense that the black community is under siege by the outside white community. Part of this problem may be attributed to historical and social circumstances of the black influx and white flight from the community, and the bad memories such an experience has left in the minds of remaining residents. And part of the problem might be attributed to the geography of the area, to where the black community is located in relation to the white community. For instance, the black community is bounded by Babbs-Tree Parkway and Babbs-Tree Park on the west, by a cemetery and a white working-class community on the southwest, by a larger black area on the southeast, and by the middle-income "integrated", or "changing community" (from white to black), of Neadon on the north. Between this "integrated" community and the park is a corridor connecting the Shortridge area to a larger black ghetto area.

In this connection, the Shortridge area appears to be a kind of outpost, evoking the image of a nascent ghetto situation. It may be that such a picture has meaning for the way the local residents view themselves in relationship to the wider community and the Shortridge school. The Shortridge school may viewed as an outpost of the Great Tradition (Redfield, 1956). Further, the school may be viewed as a mission of sorts, its teachers and principal, missionaries. The principal thinks such a characterization is apt. The teachers and the principal are inclined to see themselves as "caretakers" of the poor (See Gans, 1958; Hughes, 1964; Rainwater, 1968). They tend to view themselves as serving a group whose members are in many respects victims of the wider social and economic system. Such a view and self-conception among the staff of the school has implications for the way such people define their work with regard to the people they serve. In a word, what is thought of as administering and teaching such a clientele is to be viewed and understood in the social context of the community.

The Principal

Mr. Bud Simone, the subject of this work, is Italian and from South Philadelphia, a part of the city which is generally viewed as "the Italian section." The son of immigrant parents, he was born into a large, working-class family, grew up attending local Catholic schools, and was the first in his family to attend college. He wanted to become a doctor, but his marks were not high enough and so, in his own words, he "settled for a career in education." His father, and the rest of his family "were very proud" of his achievements. Taking his first teaching job in South Philadelphia, Mr. Simone was able to remain close to his family and kin networks. This first job "went well," and in 1967 he was promoted to the post of vice-principal of Central high school in North Philadelphia. During this period, a time of racial and political turmoil in urban centers around the United States, the issue of community-control of schools and other institutions that served blacks exclusively became important rallying points for urban blacks. Traditional white authority within these institutions became the foci of heated debates among blacks and whites in leadership positions (See Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967; [and Ocean Hill-Brownsville, N.Y. crisis]). The most militant leaders among the blacks severely questioned traditional white authority in black communities, often arguing that whites, because of their class interests and commitments, could not be expected to serve black communities well. Black North Philadelphia, widely considered to be unusually racially conscious, was no exception to the militant spirit pervading black communities around the country.

It was this sort of militant spirit within the black community that Bud had to contend with as he approached his position as vice principal of the all-black school in North Philadelphia. These circumstances worked to shape his view of the role of principal. It may be that, for him, such forces were so powerful and so meaningful that principal Simone became a creature of the politics of that local situation.

It may be that the political and social lessons he learned in this situation were invaluable for success in his later career at Shortridge elementary school. During his tenure at the North Philadelphia school, the black community residents would not allow themselves to be treated and viewed just as passive recipients of the services of the local school. They acted instead as political constituents of a kind; they were persons to whom a political response was often necessary. Mr. Simone was put in the tough position of being a kind of trouble-shooter for the school, answering questions and criticisms which the parents and residents raised. He was effective in this role, and he slowly earned respect among the blacks, people whom he increasingly viewed as constituents.

Such political behavior was perhaps the norm in the North Philadelphia community, and thus school personel seemed behooved to act not just as educators, but also as politicians of a sort, as though their positions often depended as much on their political effectiveness as on their pedagogical skills. North Philadelphia during the late 1960s was a training ground for Mr. Simone.

Because of his own sense of decency and of the political reality, he became increasingly sensitive and responsive to the demands of the blacks of his district. He was very much aware of his need to negotiate with members of the community, and he attempted to do so quite often. For instance, while initially trying to gain a place and to convey a sense of trust and understanding in that community, Mr. Simone began the practice of eating at various dining areas of the local black community, a practice he has continued in the Shortridge community. Also, he listened to and dealt with the frequent complaints of members of the black community. It is clear that Mr. Simone was not left unaffected by the North Philadelphia experience, but rather he learned from that experience and, honing his interpersonal skills with day to day social experiments, has applied what he has learned to the problems of his situation today at Shortridge.

Viewing himself as a kind of missionary, in a complimentary sense, Bud sees his work as involving service to his "people" (the blacks of the Shortridge community). His idea of service is that of helping his "people" along in the world, of facilitating their access to the "good life," of the fruits of the Great Tradition. In approaching this goal, Bud knows he must be responsive and responsible to his "people." He knows that he must "run" the school well. It also must be run in such a manner that the people of the community are able to see it as their institution, as their "neighborhood school." In this regard, Bud feels the school must serve people by allowing them to make use of facilities in many ways that give people of the community a feeling that the school is theirs and those who run it are friendly to them and on their side. Bud goes a long way toward convincing people that he is indeed their friend, that he is on their side.

In convincing community people of his sincerity, Bud feels as though he must deliver. He must see that the children of the community are being taught what they've come to school to learn: they've come to have the Great Tradition inculcated. Thus, the teachers must be committed to teaching the basics for social mobility and "success." Not only must the students be taught to read and write, but they must be taught to "behave themselves" with respect to a sense of propriety their principal--and their teachers--believe in. The teachers at the school must meet the principal's criteria for all of this. They must be ready and willing to teach such basics in order to help the children to achieve all they can to be what they can be.

Further, the teachers must be willing to view the school as a kind of haven for the wider local community. In this regard, teachers are to treat the school as a kind of community, with themselves as elders watching over the young. For instance, if a teacher witnesses a child misbehaving, he should take it upon himself to reprimand the child on the spot. Each child is every teacher's responsibility. And further, each child and every teacher is the principal's responsibility.

Bud sees his mission as that of helping the students to align themselves with the Great Tradition. It is on the basis of his belief in this tradition that he seems able to identify with his students, their parents, and others of the community; particularly those who see themselves as upwardly mobile. Perhaps his ability to identify with the students comes from his own struggles to achieve within this tradition. He tries to empathize with his people, and it is his large degree of empathy that allows him to communicate so effectively with the community residents. He has the ability to remind students that he has been where they are now, that he knows what they are going through, and that he sincerely wants to help them to get there. Perhaps it is this ability to communicate that has been so very important to his success within the community.

It is important to emphasize that Mr. Simone appears to support local community conceptions of what a "good" school is. Perhaps the most distinguishing mark of a successful school to many of the parents of the community is discipline and order. Parents and other community residents, as well as the school staff, including Mr. Simone, seem especially interested in order. If there is anything distinctive about Bud's approach to being a principal, it is his emphasis upon order in the school and the surrounding area. Through his occasional displays of commitment to authority and order in the school, Bud has won the respect of a good number of the residents of the community. Many residents characterize the school as "well-run," a characterization of which Bud is not only well aware, but also very proud.

In "doing his job," Bud Simone puts in a good number of hours at the Shortridge Elementary School. With his vice principal, Bud usually arrives between 7 and 7:30am each morning and leaves at approximately 3:00pm. Usually, Bud may be spied on the school playground meeting and greeting his students, many of whom he knows either by face or by name. He says that such a recognition factor contributes to his ability to maintain order around the playground; even among youth who've been out of Shortridge for a while. The fact that he "knows" them serves as a constraint on their potential misbehavior, at least in his presence.

In putting in his hours around the school, Bud indeed takes the run of the place. No place is off limits to him, including the teacher's classrooms during class. The teachers know he is capable of breaking in on them without notice and taking over their class for a few minutes. Such action serves to remind both the teacher and the children of who is in charge at the school. While such behavior would seem to be enough to upset the teacher whose classroom is interrupted, it is not, for the teacher has come to expect such behavior from Bud and has become accustomed to it; there is no display of anger and hard feelings. This is part of the informal air around the school which Bud tries to encourage. But while on the surface, things may seem informal, in reality they are not. There seems to be method and a certain etiquette to such actions around the school.

The teachers know they are to be strictly professional, but just to a point. They are bound to bring together the formal and the informal, the wider society and the little community of the Shortridge area. This is shown in many ways, but perhaps most strikingly in the way children are chastised and controlled by teachers and other adults. If an adult, particularly a teacher, sees a child blatantly misbehave, she or he has the right, even the duty, to chastise or reprimand that child on the spot, for children are to be mindful of adults in this environment. The adult is simply not to ignore the child and abdicate his responsibility by saying "he's not my student." On the contrary, each student is everybody's responsibility, every teacher's charge. Ultimately, Bud sees each child as his personal responsibility, and he holds each teacher responsible for helping him to meet this responsibility. Not to meet this responsibility is to open the door to potential trouble, which is something Bud would indeed prefer to avoid.

The "trouble-avoidance" angle seems to be key in understanding Bud's behavior within the setting. It appears that he is very concerned with the management of potential or actual trouble. He seems to operate in the social environment to keep people off his back and, if possible, to obtain social rewards from people. In this respect, he tends to negotiate with others of the school and the community, trying mainly to keep them happy, to keep them from having something about which to complain. The social importance of this point cannot be overstressed. For it is in these circumstances that Bud is transformed from the traditional principal with a relatively set script and role into a sort of urban political being. It is in these circumstances that his trusted and up to now informal community may be rapidly transformed into a kind of political constituency. Here he is not so much the person who represents his community, but rather he is one who serves it to their satisfaction. Thus here the amount and quality of service the community receives depends increasingly upon its political awareness and sophistication, which simultaneously determines its treatment--and definition--as community or constituency.

That the principal defines his community as a constituency in this manner opens the way for much informal negotiation which is then replete with opportunities for behavioral performances, acts, teamwork, impression management and a host of other social devices made use of by a politician under pressure (See Goffman, 1959). The implication here is that the quality of service to the community could well be a reflection and function of its demonstrated political sophistication.

Ultimately, Bud must be viewed as a strategic actor who takes a certain pride in himself as a Machiavellian person. He does not see such a characterization as negative; rather, it is proper that one in his position operate in an interactionally strategic manner, maximizing advantages, minimizing losses--and trouble--in everyday life. It may be that Mr. Simone's identification and commitment to the Great Tradition serves to neutralize any negative personal feelings he might have about his behavior. For him, perhaps, the means justify the ends. And the ends, as he views them, concerns a quality education that will allow his students access to the fruits of the Great Tradition.

Bud may be viewed as a creature of the 1960s, and specifically of his work as a vice-principal at the Adams High School in North Philadelphia. It was there that he learned to deal politically with a black constituency; it was there that he learned to appreciate the value of responsiveness to the community as a result of pressure. This is not to deny Bud's sincerity, for he appears to be quite sincere in his concern for the welfare of the students and parents he serves. Nonetheless, he must be a political person, forever negotiating with the community just to maintain his position. He readily links his politically deft responses to local problems to his survival as principal. Further, he views his own professional success and survival to his development of a broad power base. The goal of such power base takes on major importance for him, so much so that it seems to become an obsession, an end in itself, though its importance for his success cannot be gainsaid. He has become concerned with "power, power, power!" and "support, support, support!" For with such support and power, he reasons, he might be able to accomplish his goal of quality education for his constituency, but for this he must fight; he is aware of this and so is his constituency, at least important parts of it.

Mr. Simone achieves and solidifies his support through good deeds and demonstrations of sincerity. On the basis of this, he is able to recruit and gather around him loyal and key people who look out for him, people who are on his side and who share his vision of urban education. Such people are recruited from the ranks of teachers, students, parents, area residents, and administrators of the school board. They serve as his allies. Bud and his allies are reminded of the trouble and the evil in the world with every bit of trouble or resistance to his progress toward his goal. He observes the way other principals are dealt with by their local constituencies, scrutinizing their situations for their mistakes, measuring himself by their relative success or failure to achieve desired goals. For example, about a year ago, Murray Davidson, a principal of neighboring Adams high school, had trouble with students and their parents and others of that community. They complained that the principal and teachers were not serving the community well. Eventually, they demonstrated and sat-in at the front door of the school until Mr. Davidson was removed. Mr. Simone attributes Mr. Davidson's downfall to his lack of real support within the community, in the school, and on the school board downtown. Mr. Simone believes he posesses the support that Mr. Davidson lacked, and the situation would never happen at Shortridge, mainly because he is doing an exceptional job, and the community knows this, but also because he has developed over the years a broad base of support, a resource that he nourishes continually.

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APPENDIX

In what follows, Mr. Bud Simone lays bare his "own story" of the school and community in which he has been so deeply involved for the past twelve years. The "story" takes the form of responses to interview questions posed by myself in order to illuminate a general set of social issues concerning the relationship between the community and the school, relations between and among staff of the school, and, particularly, the principal's conception of his enactment of his own role. In approaching this document, the reader should be advised that it is to be taken as a form of data, and that a future product, based on the present work, will hopefully take the form of a monograph that more fully explores and conveys the ethnographic texture and context of the community as well as the role of the principal within that context. The present product has a number of minor transcription errors that resulted from earnest attempts by the transcriber to faithfully transfer the spoken work to paper. In the future version, the problem of the present interviews should be resolved.

Bud: . . . the last in a fairly large family of children. There were seven of us, five boys and two girls, and none of my other brothers and sisters had gone to college and I was the youngest in the family and from as early as I could recollect, they impressed the necessity of going to college upon me, my father did, and they always had high hopes for me to go on and finish college so that was like an expected thing for me to do. The other, another strong influence was that my father, although he had been an imigrant, had always prided himself on having risen to the position of a foreman which, you know, coming here, not knowing the language and not knowing anything necessary about the country, you know that was viewed as quite an accomplishment for him to become in charge of a certain area and be a foreman over other men. And that left a kind of a mark on me that I should, no matter what field I went in to, that I should try to be a leader of some sort, you know, at least a foreman. So, all through my schooling, there was no question that I would go on to college and try to be something different, something special. At the time I thought I would want to be a doctor, you know, but when I got into school my science grades were not high enough so I switched over to education and I graduated from the City College, I was what we called a subway student, commuted back and forth. After graduation I was inducted into the Army and

Eli: What year was that?

Bud: That was in '51. I graduated in '51. And I spent two years in the service, from '51 to '53, and even in the service, I was able to get myself into positions that were, relatively speaking, easy, they were positions of responsibility, positions of authority, although I did want to go on to get my officer's bars because I didn't want to stay in longer than the two years. I was a noncommissioned officer and I had been a company clerk, you know I worked in office, learned a lot of office routine. I was viewed as somebody who can be given, delegated responsibility and take charge of the post when the commander was away, that sort of thing, not the post but our company. During my time in the service I got married and my wife and I, she lived at home, working and I was in the service, I spent some time in Panama, some time in the Philippines, some time in the Virgin Islands and came back. So it was a rather pleasant military tour of duty. Even at that point I thought I might go back to medical school but then when I came back to the Veterans Administration to see what my benefits were and that sort of thing, I met a fellow

I had been in college with and he was the one who more or less encouraged me to apply to the Philadelphia School District for a teaching position. And I did that and while there I was given an assignment to work with immigrant children who came to Philadelphia with their parents from all other parts of the world and they couldn't yet speak English so, and I enjoyed that experience very much. In fact I enjoyed it so much that I stayed at that particular assignment for about thirteen years. But during that time I went back to school, got my Master's and went on to other kinds of postgraduate programs and even an internship at Penn for the principalship.

Eli: To go back a little bit, what were those thirteen years like?

Bud: The thirteen years as a teacher?

Eli: Yes.

Bud Very pleasant years. I have worked with children who were in their early teens. They brought a lot of personal experience to the school. We shared a lot of that. They were pleasant children, they were respectful, their parents were very respectful, you know, a very satisfying experience.

Eli: And this was a junior high school?

Bud: This was Green Elementary, but these children were junior high age children. But it was situated in an elementary school in the city and this was one of five or six such classes, you know, different age groups. I had the oldest children there.

Eli: But what area was this?

Bud: Where was the school situated?

Eli: Yes.

Bud: It's situated in what is called Society Hill. The school is still there. They still run programs of that sort. It's called the McCall School. It's at Sixth and Delancy. And that experience was very satisfying. During that time my family was born, you know, I had four children during those thirteen years, and we lived in South Philly, we lived just a matter of ten minutes' away from the school, so it was a very pleasant time, I made some acquaintances, friendships with some people in the school system that persist until today and it was during that time, during the latter part of that thirteen years when I was encouraged by colleagues and I my own principal to go on and seek a principal ship myself and at that time the course for that . . .

Eli: I'm just trying to get detail.

Bud: Sure.

Eli: How did that interaction go between yourself and people who were encouraging you to . . .

Bud: Initially I was not interested in that, you know, but later, you know, after you've spent thirteen years in a particular assignment I could have stayed there for the next thirteen years, thirty years for that matter, and with a family now and new responsibilities and the need for more income and, you know, the feeling that I, there might be some new challenges and something more interesting, all of those things, entered into my deciding to do it. And the fact that I enjoyed a good reputation as a teacher and I enjoyed a lot of success, it seemed like the next logical thing to do, to get some kind of promotion. I wanted to satisfy my family, too, you know, my father was still living at the time, and you know, my older brothers, it would have been from their vantage point a feather in their caps or something on that line. So there are a lot of things that enter into it, although I enjoyed what I had been doing, you know, all that time, it wasn't that I left out of any disgruntlement or anything of that nature.

Eli: Yes. But I mean personal relationships in terms of very important.

Bud: I got a lot of support from my colleagues. They were all giving me encouragement, giving me tips on how to go about it, you know, we had to form study groups and things of that nature to try to assure that I got letters of endorsement from my principal and other people that I had known.

Eli: Were there certain individuals who you looked up to . . .?

Bud: Well the principal, for one. People that I admired were giving me encouragement, even the District Superintendent. I had been visited while I was a teacher by the District Superintendent who spent a full day there observing me and he gave me his blessings so I felt fairly confident and assured that this should be the step I should take. At that time the process for becoming a principal, well one of the things that was encouraged was that you should come out of the classroom and be a kind of a helping teacher for other teachers, you should be a what at that time we called a collaborating teacher. Somebody who would be free enough from classroom responsibilities and whose role would be to go from school to school helping other teachers with technique, with classroom management, with curriculum, and then I became a member of the District Superintendent's staff as a collaborator, and I did that in the area of social studies and science for the next three years. It was during that time that I did something that I think helped really sky-rocket my career in Philadelphia and that was to attend a summer seminar in Massachusetts. It was sponsored by EDC, Educational Development Corporation. EDC was a national science foundation sponsored group that had a task of developing a new curriculum in social studies. So during that summer I got oriented in that material, I met people of the stature of Samuel Martin, and when I came back then I was viewed as a specialist in the whole city, so instead of being just a collaborator for one district now I was a city-wide collaborator.

Eli: How did that occur, how did people relate to you all of a sudden? My sense is that after getting this legitimation people were deferential, perhaps much more respectful. I just want to hear that in your words.

Bud: Right. I've always felt a great deal of respect, you know, I've always felt good that people looked at me as somebody who had a certain expertise, a certain knowledge in a particular area, and they viewed me as a teacher which, even today, I find that's an important feeling to have, that my staff at school view me as the head teacher not just as the principal. It was a lot of that. When I went out as a collaborator I was well received by the other teachers in the district. At that point I had been a teacher say for thirteen years so when I went in I had a certain amount of experience I was bringing with me and I think my own personality lends to that I'm not going to come off as gang-busters. I'm going to try to draw the person out and help the person.

Eli: What's your evidence that you are well received? How do you . . . I'm not questioning you.

Bud: I ran a great many workshops and they were always well subscribed to. I was asked to speak to lots of staff meetings, speak to groups, I was called in to serve on committees, you know, development committees, so there is lots of evidence that my word was respected.

Eli: In the workshops, they were like teaching seminars?

Bud: They were seminars for teachers, you know, at the time it was specifically in the area of social studies. Techniques to use, materials, specifically this particular program, its , makeups, and I was viewed as the expert in this region, not just in the city but I conducted seminars in the summer for people from other states. In makeups.

Eli: So your reputation began to spread?

Bud: It even spread here to the University of Pennsylvania. I'm sure Jim Larkin heard of me before I got involved in this program, you know, I spoke to one of his classes before, so I had spoken at Temple and at private schools and these were remuneration some of them, not here at Penn, but in some of the private schools.

Eli: I'm just trying to get back to, you know, the early part as opposed to the later part. But, I mean, you felt like all of this reputation as a teacher, as an effective teacher, as a person who sort of knew his way around and that kind of thing, contributed to the rise, your own rise?

Bud: Yeah, in a city this large, there are literally hundreds who aspire to become a principal each year and there are a lot of things that are taken into account when they assess you. Some of it is objective stuff like your scores on tests but some of the other is the, what they know of you, how active you've been, some of it is there might be political component there, what you've contributed to the field of education in the way of written material or published. All of that is taken into account so that it is important for you to become well known.

Eli: Right.

Bud: At that time when I was aspiring to the principalship, you actually needed what would amount to the votes of three district superintendents, not just your own district superintendent. So it was necessary for those people to get to know you, to know what you are able to do, what contributions you were making. And it was important for me then to be a collaborator, to be able to get around. When my name came up it wasn't something that was unfamiliar, you know, a name unfamiliar to the people, they knew who they were talking about.

Eli: Just to digress for a second, did you have as your goal becoming a principal, I mean was that . . .

Bud: Initially?

Eli: Yes.

Bud: When I first started teaching?

Eli: Yes, or did you just sort of, did it just happen?

Bud: Actually, I really got, I really, when I started, when I got into teaching I was still nurturing the hope I would have been able to go back to be a doctor. That was my primary focus, was to be a doctor. Then economic things began to occur, you know, I needed a job so I applied for teaching. Then I needed to keep a job so I kept in teaching. But then after I began to enjoy that, you know, and children came along . . .

Eli: You wanted to rise?

Bud: Yes. I needed to increase my income, you know? That was later on. Initially, when I first got in I got into it kind of like hesitatingly and then when I got in and I started taking courses and making a good adjustment toward finding satisfaction in it, meeting people that I enjoyed working with, some of, you know, my friends, then it just became a natural kind of a thing. And then later I wanted to grow, you know, I wanted to get into positions of responsibility and, you know, also make more money for my family.

Eli: As you talked I get a sense of certain breaks you have had in terms of the, you indicated, the move to Massachusetts, you consider that a significant break?

Bud: One significant break was the coming out of the classroom first, to be a collaborator. That's not a, you know, we're talking about thousands of teachers in the district. You talk about a district that had many times twenty-five, thirty schools in it and you're talking about quite a few teachers, you're talking about a lot of people and to be chosen by the district superintendent to come out and be a teacher among teachers is, that's a break, that's a significant thing. The next one was that while I was a collaborator, I was chosen from among the collaborators to go to Massachusetts. That's another break. Coming back from there and being one of the people selected to participate in the University of Pennsylvania intern program for training principals. That was another break. I think there were several things that you could point to that were significant breaks.

Eli: But all these were prior to you becoming a principal.

Bud: Those were all prior to becoming a principal, right. And then another break was while I was an intern, one of the responsibilities was to have to serve as a like a vice-principal under another practicing principal and out of the assignments there must of been twenty or twenty-five of us who were in the program and each of us had to be assigned to a certain school the next year as an intern. I had the good fortune of being assigned to a brand new school which was opening in a very difficult neighborhood. All black community but it was a community the new school represented a replacement for two other schools they had closed down and both of these communities were vying for control of the new school in a way. So, that experience was a very maturing one, very quickly.

Eli: When did that happen?

Bud: That happened in '68, September '68 to June of '69. And that was the Stutley school. That's at 15th and Diamond.

Eli: How did that go? Could you tell me something about how that whole, that seems to me like it might be a pretty significant . . .?

Bud: It was. I made a big change then from, you know, a collaborator who was more concerned primarily concerned with curriculum and with the, you know, what actually happened in the classroom to now more concerned about school-wide kinds of concerns and management and even politics. This was supposed to be training for me but in a sense I wound up with the whole ball of wax because after I had been there just a matter of a few weeks, perhaps a month or a month and a half, the principal had gotten into an accident where he was unable to report for work for a long period of time so, in essence, I took over the school. And, I was a white person. The community was all black, the students were 100 percent black, the staff was somewhat integrated, but they were not integrated in the sense that they were one staff. They were actually a staff that came from two different schools plus some people who just came in to that school for the first time. So you had, you know, you had three, at least three different elements there.

Eli: What part of town was this?

Bud: This in the north central part of town.

Eli: And the school again?

Bud: Stutley.

Eli: Sturley. What's the ? North Philadelphia?

Bud: Right. It's Diamond Street. It's up near Temple. It can be described as a very low socioeconomic area. And, as I said, there wasn't any real cohesiveness there because people came from different schools, different parts of the city, you didn't have anything that represented one homogeneous group. So, it represented getting a school started, supplying it, staffing it, making policies and procedures that were new because people couldn't do what they did in the old school. This was a whole new situation.

Eli: And the teachers there, the teachers were divided equally racially, blacks and whites?

Bud: Well, I don't remember now just what the number was but there were whites and blacks mixed in there. I think it was predominantly black. The whites that we had at the time going back to those years, this was right during the time when we had a great many teacher shortages. In fact, I think we had something like 800 teacher vacancies in the city. And, they were hard-pressed to get people into teaching. And many of the white, the old-time white teachers, had moved to more comfortable schools from their standpoint. They had moved to schools in the Northeast, the far Southwest. And the only white teachers that I can recall that we had were the young ones just out of college. The ones that had just been given a job. And so you even had that kind of a difference there where the old heads were more your black teachers who had the experience. The neophytes were more the white teachers.

Eli: Was there mobility out of that situation for the white teachers after they gained some experience?

Bud: I don't know because I only stayed there one year.

Eli: I see.

Bud: I don't know what happened. I suspect they did, because I know of at least two cases of people who have gone to other situations. White teachers.

Eli: But the black teachers tended to be a cross-section of young, old, all mixed up.

Bud: Right. More old than young. The black ones were the teachers who had come from those two other schools. That had closed down. And this white element that was in there seemed to be more the new appointments that were just made. Most of them were just out of college. Their first assignment.

Eli: What was that experience like?

Bud: It was a very challenging one because you had to walk on tender turf there because we had, as I said before, we had community groups that wanted to exert a certain amount of influence over the school so it meant that being somewhat diplomatic with them. I was always concerned about how they would accept me as a white person in a total black community. I tend to be authoritarian and I wanted the children to obey the rules and I was always conscious of how do you reprimand a child when others are around to see. How would that be accepted. How would they receive that. A white person reprimanding, you know, and I wanted to always be protective of my teachers, my staff, so if they ran into any difficulties, I wanted to be a part of that, you know, helping resolve that. So it was a very sensitive kind of a thing, but I think I handled it well. In fact, I know I handled it well, because when I left, the parents gave me a gift of $50 of their appreciation. The teachers gave me a big party. I felt very good about those things. I could walk around the neighborhood and feel secure. They knew me. I used to leave the building late, I would leave 6:00 in the winter time with no . . ., I'd stay in the building late by myself with no apprehension or misgiving. I think I won their respect, of the folks there. And I say that was an important checkpoint, milestone, because it was maturing for me, it, I came from a district when I was a teacher, where my experiences with the black community were kind of limited. I was born and taught in a neighborhood that was predominantly white. The kids that I related to throughout my district were predominantly white, as a collaborator.

Eli: Was it mixed up in terms of white? Irish, Italian, etc.?

Bud: Yes, it was Polish, Irish, Italian, Jewish. There were blacks there but, even at McCall School, when I was a teacher there for thirteen years, I was dealing with immigrant kids who were basically European, some Orientals, and the regular school had some blacks in it but even those classes were integrated because it was in Society Hill. So my experience with a totally black situation was very limited and Duckery was a good experience for me that way.

Eli: Were there any significant events that occurred that can help to illustrate?

Bud: At Sturley School?

Eli: Your experience there?

Bud: Oh sure, many of them. One of them that was, could have really been a powder keg was, there was a white substitute teacher who came in one day and the class, this was a class of fourth or fifth graders, they were acting up and I guess in the course of one of the confrontations this teacher slapped one of the children. Should I mention names?

Eli: Yes, fine, we'll delete them.

Bud: As it turned out he slapped the child of a very influential black minister, Reverand Alex Johnston..., I don't know if you have ever heard of him, but he has his church just about a block and a half from the school and he's a very active minister in the black movement, in fact the Southern Leadership . . .

Eli: I think I have heard of him.

Bud: Reverand Alex Johnston, In fact, he just came back from Iran. He was one of the ministers who went to Iran.

Eli: That name strikes.

Bud: You know, we're talking about somebody of that stature. And, I was the only one there. The principal was out sick, so it was my responsibility to call the parent in, explain the situation, and try to make the best out of the situation that we could. And that was a very difficult experience. The wife came in, I spoke with the wife, and I think we were able to get to resolve it in a very peaceful way.

Eli: Can you give me details about it. See this is the thing that hopes to illustrate, but I don't know if you can recall the details, maybe you can, but that's what help to make it . . .

Bud: Well, you have to realize that I'm white, the teacher was white, and the woman, the mother is coming in, upset, she had called and asked for this appointment, and before that I'm imagining all kinds of things happening where the woman would become angry and making demands. When she first came into the meeting, she was very, you know, very matter-of-fact and firm that she wanted an explanation and I tried to the best of my ability to explain what happened after I got the details from the teacher. I indicated to her that it was a substitute teacher, that we all have started out in our careers at a certain time and we all need the backing and support of others, particularly when things, you know, are, where we need some additional advice and training. I advised the person, in fact, I had assured her that we were not going to have that substitute back to that school any more, that the person made an innocent, you know, that most of us teach the way we were taught and perhaps this was this person's past experience. And I went into some kind of thing about it's Christian to be forgiving and all that. I tried to be apologetic in my approach.

Eli: To be a kind of peacemaker.

Bud: A peacemaker. Admitting that there was something wrong, that we do not, that is not something that we condone, it is, it was a mistake, we admit to a mistake, but we hope that he had learned something from this experience, I tried to assure her that he had. He was brand new to the experience, had no way of really knowing all the policies and procedures and that I would hope that she would be understanding and Christian and courteous. It worked out fine. And I, of course, that happened after I had been there several months and I think the word gets around in the community about what kind of person you are as a principal.

Eli: On these kinds of events.

Bud: Yes. In other words, are you a fair person. A kind of person who's really out for the best interest of the kids and the community. And I think that sort of thing gets around so that when you are in a situation like that people don't have any alienated feelings about you personally, you know what I mean, they feel your sincerity, they have seen your work and what you do and I think they have a tendency to be more understanding than coming in challenging you. So I was fortunate in that I had already built up some kind of rapport.

Eli: How did you do this? How did you build up that rapport? I mean even prior to this?

Bud: Well, I would go out and stand on the corners with the crossing guards, chat with them. That's where I heard for the first time that my big belly is a chippy's playground. That was something that I had never heard before.

Eli: The kid's dubbed you that?

Bud: No, no, the crossing guard herself, female, black woman, got friendly talking with. I tried to do little extra things, visit homes, speak at meetings, visit around the community, various stores in the community, eat in some of those stores, too. Not to hold myself aloof.

Eli: To be involved.

Bud: To be involved. There was a little luncheonette about a block away run by a black man. You know, go in there and eat some of that stuff. We sponsored little things, too, at school. Made people come in like one day a week the parents would be permitted to come in and prepare food that they could sell to make money for the Home and School. And, try to encourage involvement with the people. I think they see you coming early and leaving late. I think that has an impression on them, too. Working through, moving about the school. Talking with the Home and School Association. Sending little notes home. An incident that occurred that has, I was trying to get totally involved, so I even struck up a pen pal relationship between a fifth grade class at Stutley School and a fifth grade class where my daughter went to school in the suburbs. And got the two teachers together and they did that. That turned out to backfire in that one of the parents came to see me and, with a complaint that she was able to read her daughter's letter that she was writing back and in the letter the daughter had fabricated a lot of things that weren't true, you know. The girl from the suburbs had written a letter outlining all these things that she had, she takes piano lessons and she has a little poodle, you know all that kind of stuff. So the little girl from Stutley in answering and getting her letter together to answer put in a lot of tales about things she has that she didn't have. So this worried the mother and the mother came in to see me with it and we had to stop that. But that was another incident. I am telling you that one that I want to even get so involved that that I involved the other school and the other aspect is there are situations that we might take as obvious in good things but they may not be perceived that way in the community. I mean I could go on and tell them about other incidences. There was one that will live with me forever about the kids used to go out to the schoolyard for recess and this one day my teacher comes in who was supervising the yard with a couple of cubes in his hand, brown cubes, and he said "Do you know what these are?" and I said "No," but they looked like sugar to me. He said, "No, this is what the exterminators put down for rat poison and it's all over the yard and the kids are eating it." And, I can't tell you what fear that made run through me. I was going to have hundreds of kids dying. So I dispatched every teacher that I could get my hands on to go out in that yard and look around and grab every kid that they see with it and bring them in. So we had a couple dozen kids in the nurse's office drinking milk, hoping to induce vomiting. Calling around to Quaker Sugar, National Sugar, to see if they put out brown sugar cubes if they knew, none of them, that doesn't come out in cubes. I sent my school community coordinators, I had two of them to stores in the neighborhood to see if they can tell us what this was, if they were selling any candy or anything like that. Called the Poison Control Center at City Hall. And, meanwhile, you know, we were just waiting to see if these kids would vomit drinking the milk. During the meantime we called the parents, didn't want to over alarm them but had to let them know and somebody comes in with a little container that these came out of and it turned out to be nothing more than boullion cubes. But, you know, that could set the whole school, and if you don't take the necessary action that you have to take, could you imagine if thirty, forty kids come down sick, what that would mean? They'd lynch me. But that whole experience, as I said, was a maturing one. There was always something interesting happening.

Eli: Were there any little conflicts in that situation that you learned from?

Bud Conflicts between me and members of . . .?

Eli: Just conflicts that had to get in the middle of or even conflicts . . .

Bud: Well, yes, there were, like I said, these different groups, there was a neighborhood self-help center, Reverend Alex Johnston had one group, there was another group from the Mayfair school, who were trying to dictate policy procedure.

Eli: This was in '68 when . . .

Bud: This was in '68.

Eli: . . . when the issue of community control, particularly in New York, . . .

Bud: Control was, right. It was a big thing here, too. So, you know, certain things we had to just stick to our guns and let the chips fall where they may. And I think that we were able to handle that as well as possible.

Eli: Was there ever a big issue that way. I don't know if you're familiar with McCoy and New York and Harlem and all that and how area, tried to get control of the schools and the Jewish teachers were very concerned about competition and conflict and all that. Did you ever have anything approaching that here or . . .?

Bud: We never had the community against the staff of the school, there wasn't that issue. It was more of which particular neighborhood, which particular community, was going to have the influence in the school and be able to have things outlined the way they would like it. So it was more one community against the other community. The school was more or less like between them the victim of different communities fighting each other. The school, itself, they all wanted credit for that school because the school represented a replacement for the two other dilapidated buildings that were eventually torn down and the community had been active, really active, in trying to get a new school built in that area. So the different communities wanted credit for that. And the one thing that they had to do, this was done by somebody else prior my even being assigned there, to kind of ameliorate that situation, they had most, all schools, usually have one school community coordinator. What they had to do to that school was to keep both school community coordinators on duty. So they hired the one from the Mayfair school and one from the Nathan school and they both went on duty, we had two coordinators.

Eli: The idea being to . . .

Bud: That's the way they

Eli: . . . to minimize conflict.

Bud: To minimize conflict, to appease both communities. This was done by administration, about who should be assigned to what school.

Eli: So you see your role in that situation, at least for that year, as not only administration and dealing with faculty and students and parents, but also being in the role to some extent of this sort of superimposed mediator.

Bud: Mediator, yes.

Eli: Of holding things together.

Bud: Right.

Eli: So, you feel, I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, but I'm just sort of feeling what, just trying to get a sense of what you're saying, do you feel that this was a very significant training experience?

Bud: Oh, without question.

Eli: Developed your own perspective on things, notion of the job.

Bud: I think it was doubly hard for me because I was a white person dealing with all black people who felt a little bit of power or strength for various reasons, some were able to get grants, grant money, you know, and some represented large congregations others represented strong neighborhood groups. And I had to tread very carefully. I didn't want to come off as a member of the white superstructure. I wanted to appear genuinely concerned and interested in their issues and try to resolve it in the best interest of the community and the school. The school was in many respects looked at with pride from these people because it was something that they had accomplished and achieved in getting and it was supposed to be my training and yet because of the principal having to absent himself for because he had gotten in an accident, the whole responsibility for initiating and communicating and keeping things moving fell on my shoulders.

Eli: If that's true, that this was a training ground for you, and undoubtedly an educational experience, I want to say, what did you learn or how did this shape your . . . of the principalship?

Bud: I felt much more confident then because up to that point, as I had said, I felt confident in instruction techniques and curricular areas but I felt, at that time, prior to that experience, I felt I needed to know more about management techniques and handling people. So after this year's experience and having seen how people reacted to my style of leadership, they made me feel like I had done well and they wanted to reward me, you know, in a small way. I felt much more confident and when I was then appointed to my own school, which was Shortridge school, I inherited a situation that was very complex and I had all the confidence to be able to deal with it. At that time, and I'm going back to '69, I was appointed in the summer of '69, and I was immediately given the task of getting that school ready, getting a whole annex building ready, to accommodate all the fifth and sixth graders because the school itself had been too small to handle the burgeoning influx of kids that were coming in.

Eli: You're talking about Shortridge now?

Bud: I'm talking about old Shortridge, the old building, the old main building. Up to that point, it could handle maybe four hundred children, four, five hundred children. It had been up until that time, a small school that had mostly white middle-class children, on the suburban fringe. Had always been an oasis for teachers who wanted to go somewhere where it would be easy to teach. Principals who could find it easy, a nice place to send a principal if he wanted a rest, to recuperate. Up to that time, but something happened in the city that was changing all of that. Up until say the mid, late sixties, blacks did not move past Baltimore Pike. Baltimore Pike had been their boundary line. Baltimore Pike and Cobbs Creek. But now they were beginning to buy homes in the Shortridge area, which is south of Baltimore Pike. And that started movement out.

Eli: Could you just briefly lay out the boundaries of the Longstreth district? I have a sense of what they are, but . . . ?

Bud: The actual boundaries, at that time, went from the railroad tracks, the Penn Central Railroad tracks, from there, which is roughly one block away from Baltimore Pike, one block south, from there it went to the southern end of Springfield Avenue, so it went from those railroad tracks to Springfield Avenue, from Cobbs Creek itself, the creek, which is the boundary line the city boundary line, over to 54th Street.

Eli: On the west, I mean the east.

Bud: East. From 54th Street on the east to the creek which is the city limits on the west from the railroad tracks on the north to Springfield Avenue on the south. That area in there had a mixture of type homes but most of the homes in that area were very large type houses, some of them semi-detached, some of them with little plots of grass around them. The neighborhood, for a long time had been a neighborhood for people who had businesses in the city, substantial jobs, a lot of the people had municipal type jobs, you know, firemen, policemen, O'Neill himself came from that neighborhood, Commissioner O'Neill. He then moved later, but a lot of people with substantial income. There were a lot of churches sprinkled through that area. It was almost like a suburban type community, you know, a lot of stores on, corner stores, and a lot of little luncheonettes sprinkled through. A lot of the people stayed right in the neighborhood to do their shopping and for their entertainment, you know, there were little places that were hang-outs.

Eli: Chester Avenue was sort of a main shopping center.

Bud: Chester Avenue was a shopping center. Chester Avenue was just one street south of Springfield that was a big shopping center. It was a self-contained type of community. No big industries in there, no heavy industries in there. The only social institutions where churches and a home, orphanage.

Eli: What kinds of churches?

Bud: All different denominations, mostly, well there was Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic was, you know, had a very large church there and a Jewish synagogue, which was a large Jewish synagogue. The synagogue was right in our school boundaries. The Methodist is at one end, the Lutheran church is at another end, the Presbyterian church is at another end and the Baptist Children's House is over in another corner, but a lot of churches in the area.

Eli: A mix of churches?

Bud: Mix of churches.

Eli: When you got there, when you arrived in, what, 1970, I guess?

Bud: 1969. Summer of '69.

Eli: Summer of '69, the area was still pretty mixed up?

Bud: Yeh. When I arrived there was predominantly white. But with the notion that it was changing. And this was what was bringing in the new students to the public school. Prior to that time most of the children who lived in that neighborhood either went to the Catholic school or they went to private schools and just the children of the Protestant parents might have gone to Shortridge.

Eli: So, in a sense, the school itself was relatively insignificant, I mean relatively, relative to what it is right now.

Bud: Exactly.

Eli: But,

Bud: It was taken for granted. It is a traditional school, you know, it wasn't, it was an old building and, you know, the same things had happened year after year, the children of the kids who went there went there themselves, so it was a school that had been in the neighborhood a long time, there was nothing unusual about it.

Eli: Okay, but to go back to Sturley, your movement from Sturley to this situation, what, now, just the major rise and all that, what would you see as being, what would you say accounts for that move for you, was it just a matter of people saying, he's a good man, boom, he can work here, or did you seek this out, or did you . . .?

Bud: No, I didn't seek it out, in fact, when I was called by the superintendent to be given that assignment I had really to ask if I couldn't have some place closer to my home, because I lived, you know, way out in the northern suburbs and this is in the far southwest and, at the time, he told me, take this, because this is a school that's on its way up. Schools in Philadelphia are ranked according to their complexity and you get paid as a principal according to, you know, how complex a school is, so I was, being, you know, a newly appointed principal and, you know, normally they give the newly appointed principals schools that are at one level or at most two level. This, at the time, was a two-level school but it was going to become a three-level school in a matter of a couple of months and, you know, it was based on that that, you know, I took it more than, because at that time, you know, I was even thinking about passing that up and waiting until another one opened up, you know, closer to home. So, it was largely a decision made by the superintendent, you know, which man would, you know, fit into the job, that's what they do now, they try to match a person, when your turn comes up.

Eli: Complexity meaning what?

Bud: Well, one, the ranking is based on a series of criteria, you know. One is the size of a school, number of teachers, number of students. Another is the number of special classes you may have. Another criterion would be the rate of turnover of staff, do you have a lot of change among your staff. Another is the number of brand new teachers you might have to deal with as opposed to old heads, you know. So they have a lot of different criterions. Do you have bussing into your school, bussing away from your school?

Eli: I see, I see.

Bud: So, it's true that, you know, Sherrridge started out when I went there as a two and in the space of less than a year or maybe just a little bit more than a year, went up to a five.

Eli: Let me ask you this then just to digress just a bit. Does the racial and ethnic composition of the place, alter this ranking at all, I mean in terms of complexity, or what?

Bud: No, not for the principalship. They used to do that for the teachers. They used to give the teachers what they called combat pay. But when I talked to you before about the 800 teacher vacancy, in the sixties, one of the things that they tried to do to induce teachers to go to, you know, to stay at some of the inner city schools as opposed to moving out, was to give them a bonus. I don't remember whether it was $500 or more to stay there a year, you know.

Eli: The teachers probably jumped when you called that combat pay.

Bud: They called that combat pay, that's the way they refer to that. Some of the people stayed that way. But as far as principals, that wasn't one of the factors. The fact is pretty much based on things that were general throughout the city so they could rank all schools, you know. Did this school have more special ed classes than another school? Did this school have a lot of vacancies? And you were going with substitutes as opposed to regular teachers, that was another factor. So, at the time when, in '69, in the summer of '69, when I was given this assignment, I was told then that I had to immediately get ready for hundreds of extra kids who were coming in September who never came to that school before. And I had to set them up in an annex building which the school district bought at the time. They bought the synagogue school. And during that summer it was my duty to supervise getting that thing ready and that building ready. Physically getting it ready.

Eli: Now when you moved in there, it was an integrated community,

Bud: Right.

Eli: But the school, and the school was integrated as well.

Bud: The school was integrated, right. Now that was a different, see that was a whole different situation that I had to relate to. When I was at Sturley, there were no problems with integration. I had, you know, all black children. Here, now, with a mix of kids, there were other problems now coming up that I had to deal with, you know, interracial kinds of problems. Everything was seen as an interracial problem and there was some resentment from the part of parents, white and black parents, that, you know, on the one hand the blacks were feeling like they weren't actually openly received. On the other hand, you had the whites who were resentful because now they're giving up, you know, a nice community, a nice home, and, you know, being forced to move out by their standards, so the parent group was not too happy from either aspect.

Eli: But the PTA, of course, was integrated.

Bud: The PTA was integrated, right. The PTA was integrated but it was a new PTA in that with new people coming in now, what you have as your PTA are, you know, you have to take in some of the new folks coming in and then the only ones you have left in the PTA are those who didn't escape and run away, so you have perhaps not too much experience on the PTA. Where those people have worked with the PTA for a long time. But at that time the PTA was still very active, very strong, very large and I spent the next three years working very hard with the PTA to get a replacement school. They were very active. We went and made board presentations together, busloads of us, and had meetings at school. There would be hundreds of parents in attendance, you invited people to come down, so we had a very active group. It was integrated. But, with a new leadership. The old leadership have moved along.

Eli: Moved along. Of course, these were people, presumably, who were more interested in a white school situation, perhaps.

Bud: The ones who moved on? Yes.

Eli: Whereas the other people left were perhaps . . .

Bud: Willing to try to make a stay, make a go of it, and even in the community, these were the people who would, who joined block groups.

Eli: Interracial block groups?

Bud: Interracial block groups who tried to save our blocks from any kind of urban decay. Not have these vacated houses that lie dormant, safe streets kinds of things. At that time there was a lot of concern about gang warfare.

Eli: Between the blacks and whites?

Bud: Yes, between the blacks and whites and people were talking about safe corridors back and forth to school.

Eli: Safe corridors?

Bud: Safe routes to take. This was more   . Delineating certain streets that children should walk through. Houses were identified, but I forget what was the acronym now. Something a little label we'd give the people to paste on their windows should a child be in danger in that block to run to that house, you know, that house would give them safe refuge.

Eli: Defensive measures.

Bud: Defensive measures, yes. And, you know, this is what some of the whites and blacks were into at that time. Trying to find ways of working together, to make the neighborhood word. The neighborhood had been a very comfortable one for a long time, you know, and people had rather nice homes, took good care of them and it represented a big sacrifice for a lot of those white people to give that up, you know. At the time, I guess they had to sell at a much lower price.

Eli: And the real estate people were probably right in there.

Bud: Oh, the real estate people were thriving.

Eli: Fanning the flames.

Bud: But there were some strong, there was an organization that was developed that tried to exercise a lot of leadership in bringing the community together. It persists today, but today it's more into recreation.

Eli: To go back to the idea of the principalship and all, this move from Sturley to Shortridge is kind of like a big step in a way, it's like a real transition for you and your past experience really, sort of, helped you I guess, in some ways, to be able to meet this challenge, both educationally and personally and management wise, all of that.

Bud: See, I don't think the school itself was prepared, the staff itself. The staff that had been there prior to my coming, they had been used to a different situation entirely. They, in fact, I don't know whether it was in anticipation of what was coming or whether it was just the time for that, but two or three very fantastic teachers retired just before my coming, you know, who had represented the backbone of that school when it was a nice, small school with maybe a dozen or so teachers.

Eli: Were these white teachers?

Bud: These were white teachers who, you know, had reached that point in their lives where rather than undergo another change they decided to hang it up, you know. And they were people that had contributed so greatly to the good reputation of that school.

Eli: And it did have a good reputation?

Bud: Yes, academically.

Eli: Then, as you moved in, you were expected somehow to deal with that?

Bud: Well, sure, but the staff was not even prepared for what was going to be happening over the next three, four years, you know, of this sudden explosion.

Eli: As you arrived in the summer of 1969, what did you, how were you received?

Bud: Well, first I contacted some of the people that I knew were on the staff. I had individual meetings with them. I met with the principal, you know, who was leaving, had supper and meetings with her.

Eli: Names if you want, we can change the names around or whatever.

Bud: All right. The principal before me was Mrs. Hall:. A white principal who was much older than me and she had been there only a few years, only maybe two or three years. She had formerly been a music supervisor. The junior high is right next to that. She was very familiar with that neighborhood, she, you know, that was a neighborhood in which she had taught, had all that time as a supervisor and she was familiar with the old neighborhood the way it was, the white, middle-class type. And she fit that mold herself. I had been told that there was some alienation between her and the blacks who were coming in both the community and the school, beginning, you know, to reshape. And she left to take an assignment in the Northeast, in a school that matched the one she came from. I, in may ways, inherited that from her, that kind of a perception of the principal, you know, they more or less had some kind of negative perceptions about any principal, about me, you know, so when I came in, it wasn't to receptive a group of parents, you know. The staff was a different question, they were very receptive.

Eli: What did they do to make you feel as though they were not receptive? Did they say things to you? Did they not cooperate in certain ways?

Bud: Toward the end of the first year, things got to be very, very involved between me and some of the parents. Things that led up to that were, you know, through those years, you know, there was a strong feeling, you know, of community controled schools, there were a couple of parents there who had quasi political jobs who were like, who worked for judges and things of that nature, you know, the court, who felt that they could come in and, you know, dictate things in the school. And, about midway through the first year, we were attempting to arrange for a pshcyological test for the children of one of these parents and she became incensed over that and she got two or three other parents together to form a coalition and came in to see me one day and presented me with a letter that outlined some eighteen or nineteen demands, you know. And one of the demands was that I remove my counselor, because the counselor was the one who was recommending the psychological.

Eli: The counselor was white, of course.

Bud: The counselor was white, who had been at that school for a long time. And who was a close friend of the previous principal. So, now, you know, I saw my responsibility at that time as laying out the situation the way we saw it professionally and also of supporting my counselor. When I responded in a letter that way, they became incensed and then went to an outside militant group to try to get support to have me ousted as the principal. So the end of that first year was a rather sad one for me because, you know, I had these, although we were doing all we could within the school to keep up with the changes, there was this group here that, because of a personal kind of a thing, was making other kinds of attacks. So, I sensed at that time a bitterness toward me, now because I was a principal but because I was white and because, you know, I was sticking to this policy that, in their eyes, seemed to be unfair.

Eli: And since you were inheriting your regime. . . .

Bud: Right, I was blamed for a lot of that.

Eli: The heads of that old regime that had gone other places.

Bud: So the first year there was a lot of this black-white issue stuff, you know, that I'm insensitive to the needs of the black kids and, you know, they were picking on the white teachers there, the same kinds of things. He's not teaching black history, and that sort of stuff. There's a lot of that coming over because that was in the '60s, that was rampant throughout Philadelphia. Just about that time, at the high school in another section, West Philadelphia High School, Williams, who has since gotten herself a political appointment, was a very active person there in trying to, in attacking the principal of the high school. That became a big thing in the newspapers. And I think a lot of people in West Philadelphia got to feel that this is something that was alright to do now. So, and this was coming right on the heels of that. So that the first year, and then some of that, a lot of that, now that first year then, the counselor retired anyway, she was at the end of her, she retired. So when I was asked, I indicated I wanted a black male counselor as a replacement and they sent me a black male counselor from Temple who was young, I don't think he had much experience at all, he didn't have any experience certainly with the counseling procedure, you know, and he was a young fellow and I don't think he had much experience in dealing with people either. So he started doing things that I did not like and pretty soon he and I were at odds with each other. The parents who, the year before, were attacking me, soon got together with him to try to give him support and that turned out to be the second episode of nastiness, you know.

Eli: What did he do that was so?

Bud: Well, this very next year, the second year, this would be like '70, right, September of '70, as it was the School District of Philadelphia was having a strike of teachers and it was my responsibility at that time to try to keep the school open and try to use parental support if we could get it, you know, to help and to use any other staff members, and the only other staff members I had was a vice-principal, my assistant, and whoever else came in. A few teachers came in, Ron, this counselor, was one who came in. So when I circulated through the building to see what the situation was, which classes were staffed, which weren't, I came upon a class that needed a person so I called him and asked him to cover this in the emergency. He refused to cover it. So I said well, under the circumstances, I'm ordering you to cover it and if you have any grievance, we can talk about that later, but right now I need someone to cover. So that was one episode.

Eli: Did he cover the class?

Bud: I don't recall now whether he did or not because there were several . . .

Eli:

Bud: He was very disgruntled, you know, complaining about it and openly, you know. I overlooked that but the next day or the day or so after that he was watching, supervising another class for me in my annex and I was in the main building and my vice-principal was down at the annex with him and he's getting the children prepared to make antidemonstration signs against the striking teachers who were outside and he was going to have the kids march outside with the anti-strike signs. So I told my assistant to tell him to please desist from that and to keep, and in no way, take those kids out of the building and expose them to any possible harm, you know, to pickets and whatnot. He refused and he walked away from the job. So then I called him in and I had a conference with him and in the midst of the conference he was very, very negative toward me, and all kinds of stuff, so I said I have no other alternative but to write to his supervisor and indicate that, under the circumstances, it was best that he be assigned somewhere else. Well, then he went to these people and got these people to be his confederates and, you know, they started a whole bunch of crap and this went on for weeks until we got it resolved and he would go up to his office and just have these people who are attacking me and other teachers just the year before, come up there and they would cavort in the room and then, you know, they were drinking sodas eating in the office. It just got to be, you know, something intolerable from a manager's standpoint. And so when they went to this other group, it amounted to almost like a lynching party, they were after me, you know. They wanted to get me out because here I was getting rid of a black counselor, and they called people at the administration building, called the district superintendent. The district superintendent, at the time, was a black female who thought, in her judgment, it would be better if we had some kind of a meeting to try to resolve this and so a meeting was scheduled off school grounds, it was scheduled at the Baptist Children's House, and she was supposed to be at her meeting and I was supposed to be there and these other people, we were supposed to have a clearing of the air. As it turned out, at this meeting, she was not in charge at all, they took over the meeting and ran it like a boomerang court. And they began to sing the praises of this counselor and berate me, you know. I had with me the representative of our organization, the president of our organization, who said we'd better leave because we're not going to stay here and listen to this kind of stuff. As soon as we got up to leave, they began to attack, physically attack my staff.

Eli: Really? What did they do?

Bud: They kicked them, pushed them. Swung at them.

Eli: They people in this . . .

Bud: They had gotten people from the welfare rights organization to come in, they had gotten Black Panthers to come in. So, you know, you're talking about what were my feelings about how they perceived me, you know. I was an image of whiteness. And all that meant to them as far as their anxiety, you know, from wherever they came, this was, they didn't know me, they owed me no allegience, they came from other parts of the city. I would imagine the first experiences they had in that community were negative ones, you know, resentment from the white people who lived there before, probably some hardships, you know. So all of that stuff was dumped onto me.

Eli: So you became a sort of scapegoat?

Bud: I was the scapegoat. I was the symbol of the, you know, the establishment.

Eli: So you it difficult, relative, to manage that . . .

Bud: Yes, it was very difficult but I still was, I think, a person of principle and I wanted to do it according to what I though was right. They were asking for the ouster of certain people and I, you know, refused to buy that. I wanted certain things happening in the school, you know, regardless of who you were, there was no favoritism or anything like that. So, I think because I was a person of principle I came under that attack and, you know, I was sticking to white principles, so to speak. And that was the first couple of years. Now I must say that the thing that helped me through all that was that my staff was very supportive, not only my staff but, you know, upper administration was very supportive of me and we were able to weather that storm, that got to be very nasty those first two years. Then all during that time you'd have to envision what's happening in the school. We were growing at the rate of a new class a month.

Eli: When you first arrived, how big was the school?

Bud: When I first arrived we had roughly about five hundred kids.

Eli: And two years later?

Bud: Two years later it went up to like nine hundred kids. And then maybe four, five years later it went up to sixteen hundred kids.

Eli: How did the number of teachers keep pace with that? Did it?

Bud: Well, what we had to, we had to take on more staff all the time, you know, as you form a new class you get a new teacher, but you don't get a teacher from another school, you get a new teacher off the list or somebody, at the time, you know, we were still suffering with a lot of vacancies.

Eli: How many teachers did you have when you began?

Bud: When I began there we had, maybe I could put it this way, we only had two of each grade level. Eventually we got to where we had eight classes of each grade level. So, we went from kindergarten up to sixth grade. At the time I had four buildings to supervise. The principal before me had only the main school and a couple of kindergarten classes in another building to supervise. Then, the first summer I was there, I had to open up this new annex and another little annex, you know, in a church. So, my first year there I had four buildings to supervise and I had three kindergarten teachers, about four first grade teachers. I'd say I had a staff of say thirty people. Then, it went up to, from seventy people eventually. So, the school was mushrooming, it was growing and, you know, I had to set up, physically set up classes, move furniture, arrange for things to be picked up and delivered, see that people had their supplies and resources. I was more, I think during those years, a lot more was required of me physically. I used to walk, you know. The four buildings are separated from, all the way in the distance of from one end to the other, a distance of seven blocks. So I'd start of 58th Street and walk all the way down, you know, to off at these buildings. So, it was more of a physical demand. And a lot of this pressure about the ratio, you know, cloud that was over us, and the neighborhood just kept changing. With the attack on the school, I think it hastened the desire to people to want to move away. The school had always been a very calm, peaceful, stable place.

Eli: So whites were fleeing and blacks were coming in? And the school population was decreasing in terms of whites and growing in terms of blacks?

Bud: Bursting in terms of blacks. The homes were changing from single family dwellings to multiple family apartments. These were big homes that could be, you know, split into apartments.

Eli: And the landlords were doing this?

Bud: Well, whoever was doing it . . .

Eli: Whoever owned the homes was doing this?

Bud: Yes, even the people themselves might move in and they would not move in just by themselves, they might move in with a sister or might move in with a larger family, you know what I mean? Two or three married sisters might come in with their families.

Eli: So overcrowding was the rule?

Bud: Overcrowding was a problem of the community and overcrowding was a big problem for the school.

Eli: The community became rather dense rather quickly?

Bud: Overnight. And this is like in the early seventies. Then the neighborhood changed from what had been predominantly a white neighborhood to what is predominantly a black neighborhood.

Eli: And relatively quiet because people, because now you had eight, nine people living in that house.

Bud: And, you know, age, too, was a big difference. The people who were living there when I first went and before that were more or less the older people, settled, beyond their child-rearing age. And they, there weren't too many children around. This has now changed with a lot of younger people coming in. The blacks were younger. New families. A lot more kids.

Eli: They were right to leave. The older people.

Bud: They were right to leave for a lot of reasons, yes. And this encouraged it, you see. The large Jewish congregation stayed there until they moved their whole congregation right into the suburbs. They were still practicing at the synagogue there when I first went. But then after a couple of years, they moved their total operations to the suburbs.

Eli: Was that the last group of, I mean, you talked about the community and the school being integrated up to a point, was this, as the Jewish people left, was that a big chunk?

Bud: The Jewish people were a big chunk of the public school.

Eli: And so that left it . . .

Bud: Pretty much to a few scattered . . .

Eli: It really meant a dent into the . . .

Bud: It really made a dent in the . . .

Eli: Makeup of the school.

Bud: Integrated nature of the school. And those who stayed just stayed until their kids graduated sixth grade. When they graduated, they moved. All the other white folks who were there. The moving of that congregation was a big cut off.

Eli: And some of the Catholics began to, well, of course, the Catholics tended to go to the Saint, what?

Bud: Most Blessed Sacrament. The same thing happened there. As those kids got through the public school, as they graduated eighth grade, then they would move, you know. Some stayed until their kids graduated the high school, West Catholic High School.

Eli: So all these institutions were undergoing this change then?

Bud: Every institution, even the Baptist Children's House, was predominantly a white high school for white kids.

Eli: White Baptist.

Bud: White Baptist. Now, I don't know how many had, we were not directly connected with them, but I would say that there were hardly any white kids in there now.

Eli: So all the various instititions, can you name some of those institutions, I mean those institutions that underwent this change, can you name those, list those?

Bud: Oh sure, well the Very Long Methodist Church, had a large Methodist congregation that was very active and that's down to nothing, hardly anything now.

Eli: The blacks displaced the white Methodists?

Bud: Yes. And the blacks have bought the synagogue. The synagogue is now a black Methodist church.

Eli: Yes, a black Methodist church. I've seen that.

Bud: It's the largest congregation there now. The Catholic church, at one time the Catholic school was, I think they had they used to boast something like three thousand kids.

Eli: One of the largest in the country.

Bud: One of the largest in the country. Now they're down to a couple hundred. And those are black.

Eli: Those kids are all black?

Bud: Yes.

Eli: Are the nuns . . .

Bud: The nuns are all white. But the school changed tremendously that school, you know. A school that was very large and it had a lot of influence in the diocese I would imagine because it was big. Used to send lots of students to, you know, the Catholic high schools. Was a pretty well-heeled parish, from what you could see physically, the buildings were nice and attractive and, you know, always had a lot of active participation in the community to one that's kind of like on its way out, practically, I would imagine, if they could find a way to close it and not lose a lot of money, you know, they would. At one time they were talking about buying the public school across the street for extra class space. Now the reverse is happening where the public school has rented one whole building from them for this project. So they've really made a big change. And a lot of the families are no longer there, you know.

Eli: The various stores, Chester Avenue, they've moved from white to black?

Bud: They've changed. Right.

Eli: And the barber shops, they've changed.

Bud: Right. Everything there.

Eli: The delis, they've changed.

Bud: A lot of the stores that were little thriving shops, sprinkled through the community, have boarded themselves up, are closed now. There were a lot of little luncheonette type places, Jewish delis, soda places, you know, where you can get a soda and a sandwich. They've all closed down, boarded up. You go through now and the places that had these stores that were like basement level but pavement level, they're all boarded up. But I see, now, a few of them trying to make a comeback. Some of the merchants. Black merchants are coming back. Those seventies were really a difficult transition time for the neighborhood. There were a lot of murders throughout there.

Eli: Black-white murders or white-black murders?

Bud: Both, but . . .

Eli: During that period, how did you see yourself as a principal, see the real question is how did these experiences help to shape your perception of your role and even your enactment of that role of principal?

Bud: Well, just to be very candid, I was very worried at the time because this was actually my first assignment, you know. I wanted to make certain that everything went well and that I didn't cause any big problems and make a big mess out of things. So I wanted to be very careful not to cause even greater problems for the school system and, you know, for that school in particular. So I wanted to do everything according to Hoyle. I touched base with my superiors, tried to be objective about things, always wanted to maintain an aura of professionalism and didn't want to get pulled to any of those things that were highly emotional, you know, tried to remain as objective as possible even though the attacks were very personal and, you know, I was vilified, I was written up in newspapers, you know, and people had rented a public address system, making accusations about me being a white plantation owner. So, you know, it was a very sensitive time for me then. Associates who were in other situations were calling me wondering what was going on, you know. We went to the administration building, other principals. And something analogous to I guess what was happening lately at the Harbortown school, you know, that sort of thing where a principal puts himself on the line and then he becomes the victim.

Eli: Williams.

Bud: Williams, yes. But, as I said, I had full support of my staff and they were behind me one hundred percent which was, I think, a big help in helping to weather that storm.

Eli: Yes.

Bud: From then on it was a question of trying to keep up with the growing school, you know, and the way that problem was settled was that the children were transferred to another school. It showed support for the administration of that school. And in many ways it was like a feather in my cap for having won a tough battle, you know, initially, and staying there and making a go of it despite of, you know, the temptation to leave. I was offered a, I was offered McCall school actually, you know, if I wanted to leave.

Eli: Where is McCall?

Bud: McCall is at Seventh and Delancey, the school that I had been a teacher at. The woman who was the president of the Home and School Association at the time there wanted me back there as the principal. So, but I decided that, you know, I wasn't going to leave there and I felt a personal obligation to stay there and see things made right.

Eli: So over time you developed a kind of a commitment to the whole thing, a challenge. And you became more involved, more interested in . . .

Bud: Yeah, '72-'73. And I became active within our organization of principals too. I was elected to a leadership role in that group and that in a way forced me to become more aggressive, more competent, you know.

Eli: And that was a formal organization?

Bud: That was a formal organization. It still exists today. I am still a leader in that. I am still a member of what we call the House of Delegates - that is what we call the governing body.

Eli: What does PASA really stand for?

Bud: PASA stands for Philadelphia Association of School Administrators. It is the officially recognized bargaining group between the board and the administrators in the city.

Eli: And I imagine this group takes on for some of the court members undoubtedly informal kinds of characteristics as well. That is people get together -

Bud: Oh sure, it offers social opportunities and collegial kinds of relationships so that you can feel comfortable in contacting another colleague and get some advice or feel buoyed by the fact that you do have more support around you other then just yourself.

Eli: So it is kind of a support group as well. I was thinking that this group was in effect a support group in a way.

Bud: It was a support group in a way but in addition to that I had a leadership role in it so it required me to be more assertive myself because now I was even representing some of my colleagues. And I got involved in a host of activities through that group that brought me in contract with central administrators and other people with some relationship to the community. I had to represent our group before the board.

Eli: Kind of a support group and all. But I imagine that you could tell people your problems and get feedback, informally and then you would learn better how to handle a situation. So in a sense this was not only a support group but also possibly problem-solving.

Bud: Problem solving and information source. It was a service really - an opportunity -

Eli: You could go back to them and tell your troubles to them - that kind of thing.

Bud: Yes.

Eli: What kinds of situations you were facing and the people probably gave you suggestions about how to do this and that and you probably gave them your reactions. My sense is that it is a supportive group.

Bud: It is a supportive group plus it has a certain amount of integrity within the school system so that when that group is speaking - it has the respect and consideration from administration - a very viable group. So that is buoying - that's supportive to know that you are identified with that group.

Eli: Right. And this group was mainly principals?

Bud: Mainly principals.

Eli: You probably had teachers -

Bud: All forms of middle management supervisors - no teachers.

Eli: No teachers at all?

Bud: No. This is just middle managers.

Eli: And probably the principals that have so selected themselves out and informally became a group or would be more likely to do that then other people would do because the principals had more in common.

Bud: Now is you ask me about the genesis of this group - back in the sixties there had been a big change in the superintendency of Philadelphia and prior to that the superintendents had come from within the system and had a more aware kind of perception of the way the system operated. But with the selection of a superintendent from outside the system - he brought in with him his own perceptions of the role of the principal and the principal's status in relationship to the other categories. In addition to that he was operating under a mandate from the then Board of Education to immediately implement certain recommendations that were given to the Board from an old mail survey that had been conducted in the late fifties and early sixties. Some of those recommendations included a statement about administrators - the number of them, the quality of them, the racial composition of them - based on the recommendations of the Odell survey then the new superintendent given the mandate from the board immediately began to take a certain stance towards administrators. In response to that the administrators became a little apprehensive about their status and security. They formed what was called a Principal's Association. At that time it was just a Principal's Association but when the superintendent then began to make cuts and movements - you know - which seemed arbitrary at the time then the other administrators came into the group and formed what is now known as PASA. But its genesis started out of a need or felt need that their positions were in jeopardy and they better get together in order to -

Eli: That's very interesting.

Bud: So in response to that they were able to win from the board a contract which in essence represents perhaps the only school district in the commonwealth that does have a contract that requires them to negotiate with us. Now that is a powerful tool and it gives the organization a certain amount of strength.

Eli: Sure.

Bud: So that I as a principal in the system have this as another tool in my chest of aids to help me -

Eli: A resource -

Bud: So it is a very viable group and I am even an officer in that group so that is strengthening - that's nourishing.

Eli: Then I imagine - reiterating somewhat - I mean you probably talked informally back and forth about certain problems that you had.

Bud: That is a common experience.

Eli: So it was really an important support.

Bud: It was a valuable support.

Eli: Helping you to make that transition -

Bud: One of the big things - and I guess it is probably typical of most people who are neophytes - neophyte administrators - is the hesitancy and reluctance to share their jobs with other people. You don't want to appear stupid - you don't want to appear inept - you don't want to appear unknowledgeable about what should be the procedures and what not so that the early years of your administration - you are shy, you are hesitant, you are reluctant to talk to your colleagues although you may need it very badly. But once you reach a certain level of security about yourself which I think by the early seventies I had because I had gone through some of these tough shots the community and whatnot had taken at me and I was able to ride through that storm.

Eli: Could you just review a few of those tough spots that were learning experiences for you.

Bud: I had - the very first year I had taken over the principalship - toward the end of that year I found myself having to defend staff members against the attacks of some people in the community who were asking for their transfer out of the school. It got to the point then when my trying to defend them put me in a place when they turned their attack on me and they were making charges like I was a white racist, that I was insensitive to the needs of the community and they were asking for my removal and they went to the Board and engaged in all kinds of physical threats and newspaper and media coverage of it and making accusations in the papers and whatnot - it became a very traumatic thing for me and my staff and it even made me shy in the presence of a lot of my colleagues thinking that here I was fumbling the ball the first year. It carried over into the second year.

Eli: Was this an organized group?

Bud: No it was actually a couple of parents who had some question about their children and the fact that we were referring them for psychological exams and they did not accept the fact that we were looking at this as a helpful way in trying to provide more services. They saw it that we were stereotyping their child - that we were condemning their child - you know into special ed and that sort of thing. So they began - these couple of parents - began to mobilize and get other support. They didn't get too much support from the immediate community. They were able to get support from a couple of people who purported to be advocate groups - you know people who would champion any cause and however these people knew how to facilitate this kind of problem and then expand it and make more people aware of it and it was through these people that it got into the media and blown really out of proportion. So, you know that was one of my earlier experiences and one of the obstacles that I had to overcome. At that point luckily I had the support of my staff and the formal Home and School Association and we were able to ride through that storm and when the superintendent at that time had seen the support that my staff and the home and school were giving me they also lent their support. That was an encouraging thing. That was one of my early obstacles. Having been able to go through that successfully and having gotten these cues from these various quarters that they were supporting me - it was reassuring.

Eli: What were some other ones - some other obstacles?

Bud: Well, we were in the midst of changing community - I had all of the burdens of operating five or six different sites. Here I was a new principal and thrust into situations that I had never been trained for - you know, how to cope with them. I found myself going through the neighborhood lookings for sites that we could possibly utilize, equiping those sites, you know - it was a very physical kind of an operation. I found my scope of supervision spread very thin - we weren't able to focus at that time on pupil achievement or our real mission of educating kids. What we were into at that time was strictly like survival kind of things - providing housekeeping kinds of opportunities for the children. I found myself interviewing teachers - the school was growing quickly and rapidly and we were playing catch-up ball so to speak. I wasn't able to plan a program - I had to respond to things. Another problem was that the whole way we were set up - the way we were organized spread over these different buildings merely made the people unhappy because it looked like a makeshift kind of arrangement. We had kids in basements of churches that we rented - we had them bussed to other facilities - so they weren't really happy with this kind of thing. One of the obstacles was trying to keep people happy and let them feel that we were providing a service.

Eli: Of course, the school was growing.

Bud: The school was growing - we had all those other problems - when you grow and your span of control is dissipated that way - you can't really do the job of supervising - that was another problem, how do I supervise? How do I really get to know what my teachers are like or are doing? Part of the problem was evaluating some of the people - getting rid of the people that were not performing adequately.

Eli: And were there other problems that you could -

Bud: Well we had other problems in the community, you know. We had an identity problem - the community was changing very rapidly over those years and people didn't know us - there was no tradition here - there was no loyalty to the school - we were all new to each other. There was no matter of trust or past history you could bank on to create rapport or to continue rapport - so that was another problem. We had to create a rapport or relationship - establishing our worth - developing a credibility in the community.

Eli: How did you do that?

Bud: Well, one way was through a - as I said - was making this personal commitment. Part of that commitment was trying to involve as actively as possible the parents in decisions we were making. Participating myself on community-based kinds of committees - being active that way, joining the membership of different community groups - attending their meetings - asking for time to speak - that sort of thing - speaking at the church - making myself visible, trying to provide as much service as possible, going beyond the school day even, making a time commitment that in many respects represented like a 12-16 hour a day commitment on my part - night meetings, opening up the school to night meetings, trying to deal with community-centered issues and using the school as a meeting place or a place where they could be discussed and you know, treated. There was as I said before - I think I had mentioned it before - there seemed to have been over that transition period from white neighborhood to a black neighborhood a loss in the leadership base in the community. There were no more groups or institutions or organizations in the community that represented leadership except the school. We were the only institution that persisted through this change.

So we were looked at many times to provide the leadership. I had to make myself available that way. Whatever it was, we had gang problems. We were involved in that you know, in trying to help toward the solution of that. There were other community-type problems--the housing and the garbage, as trite as those things might seem - you know the pick-up of those things.

Eli: I assume there were circumtances in which you took the initiative rather then simply respond.

Bud: Exactly.

Eli: Initiated action -

Bud: The way I exercised that initiative was always trying to guide whatever little leadership there was - you know, we had a couple of organizations, more or less emerging groups like the Southwest Human Relations so that the technique and strategy I used - being aware that there was no real leadership here - I was trying to build that leadership among people in the community who had shown some initiative in that regard.

Eli: And to include them in policy-making.

Bud: And to include them - I called meetings here for example and asked representatives from different institutions - most were like church groups and this group I mentioned before the Southwest Human Relations Committee and we have another organization - the Baptist Children's House and you know, there were meetings that I called here in response to certain things that I felt we could do or should be doing in concert. Other times I just suggested to them that it would be a neat idea to do this. In response to some of the gang problems I made the school available for a lot of evening programs to try to keep the kids off the street and productive and together, jointly with the Southwest group and myself we formed almost like a night program - almost like a YMCA night kind of thing here -

Eli: You even gave dances - teenage dances -

Bud: Teenage dances - we had a basketball league, we had instructional kinds of programs - basic kinds of vocational things - you know, one course was on basic electricity. We had some on cooking and things of that nature. Just to try to give the kids some other opportunities - other then have to hang out on the streets and getting into trouble. Those were some of the obstacles.

Eli: Sure, but also to make your place in the community more secure.

Bud: Right.

Eli: And more -

Bud: Present myself as a person interested in the community, interested in the kids and wanting to do my share up front by participating actively and thereby developing this credibility in me.

Eli: So you responded in a sense with involvement.

Bud: Active involvement - it had to be visible - it wasn't just behind the scenes kind of thing. If there were delegations that had to be formed I was part of that delegation if we went to ask for some service. When there were meetings called - they were held here. I was a part of that. I might have been the one who developed the agenda or was the facilitator of the meeting. Participated on these other institutions' governing bodies - leadership groups, whatever they had. So there was that active thing that I wanted to do - I wanted to show my commitment - active participation in community affairs.

Eli: And you came to this in '73 - you came that this was the way you had to deal with the situation in order to be trusted - in order to gain the confidence of people.

Bud: I didn't come to it in '72 - I realized you know when I first took over the helm here I needed to be active in community affairs. I knew back at that time I would attend meetings and whatnot. But beginning '72-'73 when more of the initial leadership had left the neighborhood I felt that it was incumbent on me to be more assertive and to take a more active role in the leadership. There was a void here in leadership.

Eli: Are you prepared to say that initially you were possibly more responsive in a sense and then after you began to see or focus in on the problem you began to initiate -

Bud: Became more directive -

Eli: Yeah, right. So that there was a slight transition.

Bud: And I think part of that was - the change in attitude - probably came from a couple of different sources - one was this renewed sense of confidence in myself - another was the fact that I emerged either by accident or by design as a leader in the community, a recognized leader.

Eli: And part of this -

Bud: Of course there were no others.

Eli: Part of this feeling came about because of the feedback you received from the community, from your staff, from the people downtown.

Bud: That feeling of confidence in myself.

Eli: And you began to get a sense that you must be doing something right - you began to do more then that in a sense - to feel confident.

Bud: At the beginning when you get criticized - you are not really sure whether the criticisms are valid or not - until you get some feedback.

Eli: Sure.

Bud: It assures you that you weren't so bad after all - it was probably somebody making some unfair accusations or assessments.

Eli: So in a sense you really learned from that initial period and you began to - I am just sort of thinking outloud here - but it seems as though you learned from the initial period - formulated certain principles and then moved on those.

Bud: Right.

Eli: And those principles perhaps characterized the rest of your -

Bud: My style of administration -

Eli: And a lot of that style emerged from your initiation in a sense.

Bud: Of this more direct leadership. I viewed the school as a real leader in the community. With all that change that was occurring I didn't want to see the community moving in a direction that would be unproductive. I tried the best I could to help steer -

Eli: So, you say that those principles did emerge after you were initiated in a way. What kinds of things happened from then on that related to those earlier views that you gained? What specific things happened that could be in some sense a reflection of your learning - your experience - what things did you handle - what problems did you have that you had to rely on this experience -

Bud: Well, as we moved into those early '70s - some of the other pressures on my time were beginning to plateau - we were able to consolidate our physical operation into three buildings as opposed to six or so. We were able to enjoy this new facility which in a way was regenerating - you know it took away some of the other problems that confront an administrator when you have a staff that might be a little disgruntled because the facilities are not right - you know, there is a certain new, renewed pride in your place of work - some of that helps you out. Because of my involvement in PASA I was asked to serve on a lot of central-type committees - you know we dealt with issues confronting principals at large. I became more aware of the total picture here - I became more familiarized with the inner workings of the system - I became acquainted with a lot of people - people became acquainted with me - I was asked to provide a lot of leadership among other principals in leadership training programs - I was considered somewhat of an expert in the area of curriculum and I was asked to do you know training of teachers - it seemed like over these years that my reputation was growing you know as a competent principal - people were asking for my advice and people were asking for my participation in leadership kinds of roles and all of that was reinforcing you know one thing helped the other and I think it built up for me no only a nice ego thing but it also built up a broad respect throughout the system you know for me and that was something else that made me feel little strong and powerful - that I was viewed by my own colleagues as somebody who had an important message in different areas not only in the area of administration but even in curriculum - my staff through those early years developed a respect for me because I think in many ways they viewed me as one of them as their colleague somebody who was familiar with pedagogies, familiar with cirriculum so that's the image I wanted to protend with them I didn't want to come off as an administrator - I wanted to come off as their colleague who had a little bit of knowledge about the craft and could be a help, could be an advisor in that area.

Eli: With the terms which you felt your staff's view of you was changing or their points of view -

Bud: When you're first assigned to a place you're not sure how the staff perceives you and yet you have that whole thing to do of establishing a good relationship, establishing your control and power over certain things. I sought to get that through a respect through an area of respect for my work as first of all as the head teacher and that's been another one of those things that I said before that I resolved and I wanted to become one of the best principals in the city by also establishing myself as the head teacher in school, being able to provide leadership in which way the curriculum should go and being knowlegeable of the curriculum. You asked about separate instances, there were instances when members of my staff challenged me in that area and I had to take steps of either trying to reconcile here or ask them to leave because through this program that I talked about that I was involved in this assertiveness kind of a thing you know I learned that if I felt I had a program that I wanted to initiate and we came to loggerheads then a choice had to be made either we go with my program or yours and if we go with yours then I can't be the administrative head of this school.

Eli: Can you talk about a specific instance where you've had to come to loggerheads so to speak - you had to assert your power and thereby remind other people who was in charge - could you review those?

Bud: Sure. That has helped bring the others in line - I had a teacher who insisted on using her own reading material -

Eli: Oh yeah you told me about that one.

Bud: Despite the fact that the whole school was working on a certain plan which incorporated the use of the particular series but despite my requests that she use the same material that others were using she persisted in using her own stuff - even tried to rally the parents of of the kids in her room to attack me as being insensitive and not providing for the kids the best possible material - you know - in her eyes and I had to take the necessary steps to have that lady removed from the school and we did.

Eli: What year was that?

Bud: That was like '74 or '75. That was just one of a number of instances where I had to -

Eli: What was some other ones?

Bud: Well - I had one of my, one of the persons who should be a key person in this school who has the role of the reading teacher was a - you know when you're one of the key members of the school the others look at you and see how I'm going to handle that situation who had a very bad absentee problem - I had to take steps to have her removed - It's no easy task in the City of Philadelphia to have a teacher removed - they have a representative moved that's pretty powerful and you know you have to really follow procedures to the letter - other teachers for one reason or another were creating relationship problems, interrelationship problems, employee relationship problems - I had to take steps to have them removed - there was -

Eli: So that accomplishment really enhanced your visibility in some way while people perceed you as a powerful person -

Bud: Exactly - or a person who can get things accomplished - that's in the negative - its positive but it's still in the exercise of power - that was in that aspect. There were other excercises in power where I was able to get things accomplished for the school - you know - more programs, more benefits, more resources through these contacts that I mentioned I was able to get for the school funding, involvement in projects which also gives the appearance of a man who is a shaker and a mover to get things done - so you know - It's interesting that this lady you just mentioned is a lady in the community who has made like a 180° turn in relationship to her attitude toward me and know I consider her a very cooperative person somebody who is very willing to go along with my wishes and you just heard where she would do whatever I said - you know - as far as the job is concerned which I think is good.

Eli: And as you win one person over that undoubtly reverberates -

Bud: Right

Eli: through the community and other people -

Bud: One of the most powerful things her as far as the image of the school is the word of mouth transmission over the years we've had a lot of parents working in the school as aides, volunteers and what not and their eyewitness statements about what happens in school - its a powerful tool - you know - and this particular lady is an influential lady, she has like a quasi-political role in the community and she's able to talk to a lot of people - you know - and I'm sure she's giving them pretty positive statements about the school and likewise these other parents you know have been talking and singing the praises of the school which has a way of winning more friends and regenerating a good image - our enrollment to date is swelling - I think because people feel that this is a good school and they want their kids come here - so in the past 20 days we've admitted 33 new kids - right now I have a child sitting out there - you heard me talking - I'm in a quandry now because physically we don't have a desk, we don't have a chair, we don't have the space in the room to put more kids and that is not only complimentary to me its complimentary to the staff, it's good for the morale, its good for the   and you know all of things are interrelated so that -

Eli: And that's very different from what was happening in the very beginning when you took over

Bud: In the very beginning we were admitting kids left and right because they were moving into the neighborhood and this was the only school, now their coming into the school as a matter of selection and choice - they had no choice then you know but what we find now is people are contriving ways to get their kids in here you know saying now that the kid is living with grandmom or the kid goes over to his babysitter and they just moved into the neighborhood you know that kind of stuff

Eli: Would it be fair to say that you achieved this kind of attractiveness through good deeds, good performance in someway?

Bud: I would like to think that and you know I think that to a great extent it's true and not because I'm saying it but because I've heard through other people - we've gotten commendations of one sort or another - there's enough evidence from visitors that come in and when they leave they invaribly make some comment about the nice atmosphere around here our scores your know on achievement tests seem to reflect we're doing alright by the kids -

Eli: And I guess the track record in terms of where people go from here is pretty impressive.

Bud: Right. From our last year's number of - out of the 66 children from sixth grade graduated from her last year over 50 of them were selected to participate in alternative model of the school that parents wanted them to go to which depended on their achievement record and their attendance, their punctuality you know and their past history at the school - so we feel good about that you know our track record was pretty good.

Eli: You evolved into it

Bud: We evolved into it - at the beginning as I mentioned I was playing catch up. My span of control was spread over so many different sites and I found myself, at that time, having to set up classes at a rate of a class a month - when that's happening you can't do the kind of pre-planning and program type planning that you would like to do because now you're involved in more survival kinds of things but as a plateau we were able to launch out now into more programmatic areas - I set for myself these goals of personal involvement, commitment and all and we organize our program to implement these things you know - I wanted the school to really reflect a community-type school, one that voiced having the concerns of the community at heart, responded to those concerns as best we could, made its resources available, had an open door policy - you know - participated myself as much as possible on community type activities - my staff, as we grew together, they were the kind of people who sensed what I was interested in and were able to accommodate those things and those who couldn't we lost them on the way you know - what emerged was a staff that was pretty cohesive in its attitude towards how we involved parents, how we deal with kids, and what are my interest you know - what are their interests-

Eli: And there's no mistake --

Bud: No, it's pretty up front and clear

Eli: About who runs the school

Bud: It's pretty up front and clear

Eli: How the school should be run

Bud: How the school should be run, it's pretty up front and clear how the school should be run. I think that the fact that we've been pretty much together now, you know those who are here, almost for the entire length of my stay you know helps because now they have a clear understanding of what I'm interested in there's no mistake, there's a high trust level between us - all that supports the program - It's not something that could really be defined in a nutshell you know - it's something that took a lot of energy to accomplish and a tremendous

Eli: Trial and error

Bud: trial and a persistence you know

Eli: But you had a principle though, I mean it was trial and error that you seemed to have had some kind of principle

Bud: Oh yeah, I was operating under what I consider to be an administrative tenant you know - this was the way to accomplish something but I one thing you have to do is persist in your aim whatever it is

Eli: Accountability seems to be one the mainstays of this, accountability of teachers -

Bud: I believe in providing a quality service, I think I might even do that to a fault where I don't hide my feelings about certain things, if I see something that's not going right, I think by my facial expressions first I show that I'm not happy or pleased with that and you know it's easy for people to know exactly how I feel about certain things because I show it right away

Eli: And you're able to do something about it -

Bud: Yeah

Eli: Which is very important in this whole thing

Bud: Right, I think that people respect and they know that if one of the things they are trying to do is please me in many ways and I feel good about that you know there's that respect for me that they want to please me - I think that part of that respect comes out of the feeling that they have that I'm level headed, I'm fair, I know pretty much what I'm talking about, that's their feeling now you know I'm not saying this is necessarily true - I do feel that I'm fair but by my leadership in a lot of these citywide committees and projects they've come to feel that I'm respected and that I could be a help, could be a leader in the field of the program and curriculum - and I really want to make that point that the thing that has helped me develop this respect with my staff is the fact that I've been very active in the curriculum area - the one thing that was hurting me at the beginning was that I couldn't do that it was deterred by these other physical kinds of constraints you know but after we plateaued in those you know '73, '74 then I was able to get back to my real interests, my real love is in the area of curriculum, my own orientation as a teacher has been in that area and I considered myself a expert in the area of curriculum when I was a teacher, I have been recognized as an expert teacher - that began my career really as an administrator when I was selected by the superintendant to be a collaborating teacher who in essence is like a lead teacher to go around and help other teachers and then from that I went for some training in a special program which even heightened my expertise, now I was a specialist in this one particular program -

Eli: And you probably demonstrated this to the faculty now and then

Bud: Well, through - let me give you a instance of how I demonstrated it to the faculty - Back when the school, this new building first opened, we were confronted with the strike at the same time, prior to that we had met over the summer to discuss how we were going to make our transition from the old building into the new building and what they needed to do - so there was a whole process there where I was meeting the faculty through this kind of process or this assessment of steps we should take and I had to be a leader then you know but at the same time in September when the school was supposed to be opened we were confronted with a school system strike - at that time many of the elementary school teachers were coming in few people were staying out on the picket lines but the school system gave permission to the schools to open one hour later to allow them enough time to assess how many teachers they had and get ahead on things and then open it for the kids at 10:00 well that time between say 8:45 and 10:00 was time I could use as an administrator for whatever purposes I wanted - well I had most of my staff showing up so there wasn't a problem of not enough coverage and all that sort of thing for the kids so I took advantage of these one hour and 15 minute early times to provide the staff development program for my teachers and I did that for a couple of reasons; one was to get them equipped to maybe implement this when the kids did come back; the other was to take their focus away from the strike and have us concentrate on more pleasant kinds of things which really accomplished that it also asserted that I do have a message in area curriculum and that I was able to demonstrate my expertise -

Eli: You care about that

Bud: Well, not only do I care about that but the kinds of activities I engage them in, the kind improvisation that was being transmitted was valuable stuff for them and that helped increase their respect for me in the area of curriculum I'm talking about

Eli: That seems so key in running a school, that the principal has to be respected by his staff and by the students and if that respect is not forthcoming there is talk behind his back and this and that, if if....

Bud: There is only going to be talk behind his back

Eli: Well, I mean really negative stuff, real dissention

Bud: Right, but the dissension is in this school anyway is not any great dissension it's always going to be something but you mentioned an important thing, it represents - the thing that I notice that has happened, years ago when I was a teacher, I'm going into the 50's you know even before that, the principal represented an authority person just because of his role, just because of the title that was put on him you know and he had power, he had control over the various aspects just because of that title, regardless of what personal attributes of that title you know - with the advent of the unions and all of these advocacy groups and there are so many other power influences around you no longer can rely on just the title you have to back it up with something and you have to back it up with a lot of personal kinds of attributes you know - particularly skill in communicating, the ability to be assertive, the ability to feel powerful to be able to first of all interpret where you can get the power out of what little power there is there and how you can get control over that you know

Eli: Would it be fair to say that if you had not felt approval coming from the people downtown and someways approval coming from the faculty and the parents, you would not have been as confident, you would not have been as forthright perhaps in your demeanor and your and you wouldn't have been able to operate really so you really needed that positive feedback and support and that helped you in your role as principal

Bud: There was no question that that was an important thing for me to have at that time, in fact, I don't know if I mentioned this to you before I was being asked to assume the principalship of another school a kind of elite school you know in the city by the Home and School Association of that school and the staff of that school that was the school where I had been a teacher, that was just about this time when here at this school I was coming under attack and those people there wanted me desparately you know and making overtures to get me, had even gone to the step of contacting administration, expressing their interest in that making all the necessary moves and political contacts to assure that, I had an interview with the superintendent of that district and you know at that time I told them I would have taken it had circumstances been different but I saw what was happening here as a challenge for me personally and I didn't want to walk away from this and make it appear to my staff and the community here that I was abandoning my responsibilities, I felt right in what I was doing, I felt that I was really asserting the position that I had to defend - I didn't want to make it appear like I was walking away from all that you know I turned down that opportunity but I was reassured by the fact that the real people involved with the school here were not attacking me it was really these outsiders -

Eli: That must have been a very important time, what year was that? That was a very important incident -

Bud: You know I have the newspaper clippings at home where they might make interesting reading you know - I often think of it, it was roughly in '70, '71.

Eli: I see

Bud: Just, my first year here I was appointed here '69

Eli: That might have been very important for your later success really because at that time you had to make a choice and the community had to make a choice, it was a real educational process perhaps for them and for you -

Bud: They showed their support in me, they made a choice in my favor so I felt it would be encumbered on me to stick with them

Eli: So that was an important juncture

Bud: Right and what I often thing of is in this decade I've gone from one type of an article about me in the newspapers which is really

Eli: You can tell me about that one other advantage, want to get one other major event that was a kind of a milestone you say -

Bud: The one I was just talking about that into a big thing you know, it shouldn't have but it did, mostly because these two mothers who had not gotten their way then went to seek help from these other advocates from outside the system and then it became a very big thing they went to the superintendent, they went to the Board, they put articles in the paper, they picketed around the school all that nasty kind of stuff something similar to what was happening at Harrity - they didn't close down the operation because my teachers

Eli: But it was an attempt to get rid of you

Bud: An attempt to get rid of me after they came with these demands which I responded to in a way that pleased them, then they moved their attacks on to me with the objective of getting me out and getting their way

Eli: Would it be fair to say that the eyes of the community and the faculty, the staff--you were the central figure

Bud: I was the central figure, I was the one coming under attack, my name was the one bandied about, the criticisms were then made of me and these other teachers but I was the issue there, it wasn't the program, I was the issue and I think having come through that successfully made everyone around me who knew about the situation feel good and confident that we were winners we were victors and that -

Eli: After that -

Bud: My stock went up

Eli: Some people who have possibly under whatever probably feel in line

Bud: Well, this lady that we were talking about wanted to know should I take my kid home or leave him here was one those people who was on the other side of the line

Eli: So the learning of the social learning process by the community as well as for your staff and students

Bud: Another big milestone that I mentioned was in the school, we didn't just get this new school by accident, there was a very active campaign on my part and the part of the Home and School Association at the time to get the Board to see the need in this school and that met my going through the neighborhood with a bull horn in a car I had the school bullhorn out the window of the car telling the people come on to the meeting, we made several presentations to the Board, we sent delegations you know I was a part of that to go to talk to people downtown to get them see that we needed a new school - so that was another milestone and that was another - do you know what it's like to win for a community a brand new building? Well, you know you have an old dilapidated building right? because of your efforts, and because of your campagning, you know you wind up with a new building - now I was here in, I started here in August of '69 - we occupied this building in '73 it was a victory, it was an accomplishment, you want to look like a shaker and a mover, Jesus Christ! you've got a whole new building you know a whole new school - that's got to be another feather in your hat you know -

Eli: There was those two major accomplishments

Bud: -Yeah, on the one hand I defeated my opposition on the other had I won for the neighborhodd a brand new facility and the next when these other pressures and some of these other pressures subsided

Eli: You began to include the community more

Bud: The we were able to do programs

Eli: To show them that this was really theirs, which allowed them to feel hey this guy is really on our side

Bud: They shared in the cake we got you know - we got this cake now it's ours, let's enjoy it, let's utilize it, let's be a part of it and all the things we did from then on were making the school a part of this community

Eli: Open to the community -

Bud: Open to the community, part of setting the direction in which the community should go you know, seeking additional services, not just limiting ourselves to what was happening in the school but being involved in what was going on outside, promoting certain kinds of projects, bringing in councilman, bringing in politicians, bringing in the police whoever, the crime prevention network, bringing them all in to try to look at some big problems around here we have a stake in. I could have locked the door and said we are only concerned with the elementary kids, but we weren't - we gave awards to kids from all the schools in this district for sports accomplishments you know - we bought them here, I don't know if you've ever heard of Gene Banks, he's an outstanding basketball player from West Philly - we had little kids from all the schools who had distinguished themselves - they came here, we gave them awards - we called them the annual Shortridge - Schwartz award. Just a way of recognizing kids you know so we went beyond the walls of our school to create this image of interest in the lifestyle in the community -

Eli: One of the questions and that'll be the last one, how do you feel about being interviewed?

Bud: About being interviewed?

Eli: Yeah, about being interviewed

Bud: I don't feel any insecurity about it, I feel confident enough in myself to not feel threatened in anyway. I hope that you know what I am giving is of value - one of my concerns is what the hell kind of importance can you make out of this you know for you I hope that the message is valuable for you and you're an easy guy to talk to - so that there's no problem - I like the opportunity to share some of these things - You know right now a lot of this is reflective - it might be good for a principal to have somebody like this who would be there all the time so you can bounce these things off and just talk about them you know - without being judgemental you know which is good - if I go anywhere and talk to even my colleagues they're going to make some judgement which sometimes would inhibit a person from going in the first place saying I don't want to be criticized. You're not into that you're just receiving you know I'm just getting it off my chest as administrators we don't have this luxury all the time which might be something interesting- in fact I think it might be an area where the university and the schools can get off on a kind of cooperative enterprise where periodically you know we can get together just to rap without there being necessarily anything more done with that other than an opportunity to care So far as being interviewed I feel good about it you know I feel like you know gee this is great, how often does this happen to a guy who is interested in in what we did and to want to know a lot about it, I feel sorry for you (laugh) your're the man who has to listen to all this

Eli: No, No, this is fascinating, it really is, so much that I've learned from this.

Bud: We're talking about a dozen years of happenings, that's a hell of a contact, it's a hell of a culture

Eli: I think we've put together in some sense, even if we're a little bit vague kind of formula, I mean for it not for success for tips for manager situations But we'll see as we go on with it. You've really done a

Bud: One thing that I've always felt was an important element with the element of time and maybe we don't have that luxury all the time, like I said that first year, what the hell, I wasn't there long enough over there getting kicked in the backside I didn't have time to demonstrate my capabilities, that's an important thing that a person is given enough time to demonstrate - I really think that time is important to for getting to the point where you can then start making an impact on the program - my product is really the program - If I can't develop the program and implement it and sell the program the way I want it, then I'm not a leader, I'm just responding to what's happening - I have to be a strategist and part of that is given enought time to do it in a way that can be absorbed readily by the staff - another part of that is being able to have an awareness of all the things that influence my moving in a direction I want to go into - and I think that time helps me there you know you just come into the situation you know you don't know all the - over the ten or twelve years I could pretty much identify what I think I would be careful of, who should I touch base with - I've been lucky, I've been able to do that you know, some guys might find themselves in a situation where their personal problems they can't so people don't want to - I said before I've attended night meetings religiously, I attended some on Sundays church - If you're in a kind of personal situation do that, then you have to find a different way - I think the key thing is making yourself visible - you have to come off as a guy who is making a tremedous - if you ask the people here I think they would he's a hell of a busy person you know - I want that image - I'll not walk down the hall empty handed - I'll walk down the hall carrying something even if I'm just going to the toilet but I'm carrying a piece of paper - it's important for people to see that you're always working and it's important to see what time you come to school - it's important that they feel that they can come to you and in someway your're going to carry their problem one step forward otherwise you're not a person I've found that over these years now, these past five years people are coming to me with other kinds of problems and not the school's - who do I go to see about finding a nursing home for my

Eli: You're a knowledgeable person

Bud: Yeah, in other words they feel like a leader - I have knowledge, I have contacts

Eli: A resource person

Bud: How can you get this family out of here because they are a bad family in the neighborhood - dope addicts and that kind of stuff - I don't know how you get that other than you know what the hell I've been doing - just trying to be responsive - I listen to people - I leave my door open

Eli: Will you enjoy a reputation for that

Bud: Yes, I conscious that everything is related to the image and I wanted that good image - whatever I do - however I do it that's always in the back of my mind - some disfavor or some kind of claim One thing I've always wanted to do but never had enough resource to really go on an active program of keeping the media informed of what we're doing - you can't do it - you can do a little bit - that's important to find a devices by which to funnel stuff out - we rely by word of mouth which is effective

Eli: Very effective - for the local community

Bud: For the local community you know some ways it works out - I don't know another milestone - I don't know if you know but another one was getting involved with and Dr. Votel in the The Program was a program designed to get parents involved in assisting their children in pre-reading kinds of activities - creating a literate environment - the design of the program was that they the parents would come here every week, at night every Thursday evening and Mort Votel had his dragon students, some 60 of them come here - they would get their course instruction here and following that they would tutor these parents - one-to-one basis - the design was that one-third would work with one of the staff people recent graduate students in the presence of their child and then the staff person demonstrated some activity or technique and then the parent was supposed to replicate that in the presence of the staff person and then they were given the materials and whatever they needed to go home and continue that through the week and the next week they came back for the same thing - well after a couple of weeks the reception was so great for that that our numbers doubled so that every staff person had to take a couple parents - not only were they bringing one child - it was originally intended for the first graders or kindergarteners, now they were bringing any of the children all the children they had, some were older and that continues in the whole year - that was 1976 now I was here physically seeing that all the physical things were attended to - we have practically a whole night school operating you know every Thursday night a lot of involve it was opportune for them - the supper dishes were done - they can come and spend a couple of hours a week - that left us , left the parents anyway with a good taste in their mouth for what we would be willing to do - some of my teachers even got involved - none of this was for pay or anything, all volunteer and the kids began to demonstrate some improvement in the day school that high school teachers began to look as this as something positive too, the parents looked at it as something great - we even had a graduation ceremony at the end where we gave each parent a diploma that we made up - so this was another milestone this was another good thing we demonstrated - demonstration of a real commitment to wanting to get our kids improved and to help parents - now those parents became spokespersons - we had apostles now, we had 120 apostles who went around and the second year that we did it we had like 300 parents coming from some other school districts you know we had people who had heard about in other schools and they wanted it replicated in their schools - the third year that was so by this means the word was spread about the good things that were happening here and to me there is no better device then word to word not the mouth dissemination of information you know - buddy talks to buddy and our reputation broaden that way and we were fortunate then in being recognized were some positive all those things contributed to our enjoying a good image - and with Dell Heinz around the same time '76 or '77 we began to talk about some other connections with the university; one of my concerns and I expressed it to more and more until we reached to Dell was in this whole area of really getting to do some studies about the neighborhood so we can make our program more responsive to the needs you know we got into this ethnographic monitoring projects where we brought in key people in the community first to talk with them about how they felt about this whether we could count on their cooperation, there was a dialogue between the people from the university and the people from the community and the people from the school it's like a three-way partnership there and from that we developed this ethnographic monitoring project which really was intended to even be more responsive to but what people see is that we are providing services - we go beyond - we're engaging the resources of university to help us and if people see that it helps our image it helps create a real positive attitude about this place so there have been a lot of particular instances - I can go through my calendar and if you want a chronology to pinpoint dates

Eli: Actually we covered that middle ground

Bud: It became my goal. It became my personal goal to really get a lot of parental involvement, parental support. And that has been my objective, you know, these years. And to constantly do things that would make the parents develop a very wholesome attitude about the school, a good image for the school, and that has been my objective. And that's one of the reasons why the past five years we've developed this very close relationship with Penn in trying to implement the PCR program, you know. It was, you know, it was in some respects even viewed as a way of improving the image of the school as much as improving the achievement of the kids, you know. And fostering good public relations with the community. And a lot of that has developed as of present.

Eli: How do you go about doing your daily thing around the school? What's a typical day like for you?

Bud: I don't think there is a typical day. What I always, my ideal, has always been to try and get as much time in the classroom as possible. But that seems to be an impossibility. At best what I've been able to do would be to block out a Thursday morning and not accept any calls and any interruptions and spend all Thursday morning making my long commitments to teachers. On any given day, my day starts out a quarter to eight in the morning when I get to school. I make a preliminary check of the building, touch base with the custodian to see if he has anything he, you know, wants to tell me about the security of the building of anything that might have happened over night. Then go over to my office and I make my calls, whatever calls I can make at that time because soon after eight o'clock you start getting an awful lot of inquiries from parents by telephone about whether this or that thing is going to be happening at school that particular day, you know, and special trips and programs or whatnot. So, starting at eight o'clock you pretty much become responsive to what's happening from parent inquiries, parent visits to the school, that kind of thing. That's up until a quarter to nine. You know, meanwhile teachers are coming in, you're greeting teachers, you're giving little banter with teachers in order to keep their spirits up, I think. Then a quarter to nine we, all during this time, between ten after eight and a quarter to nine the children are, some children are eating breakfast so I might go there and visit with them or see how that's going. Then at a quarter of nine the children are expected to line up in the yard to come into the building. So I'll be out in the yard at that time, you know, general overall supervision along with my staff members and that usually, that generally takes, for them to come in, for all of our kids to come in, that generally takes until about nine o'clock. By the time they file in, meanwhile, if I see some parents about the yard, I'll go over and chat with them and, you know, ask them something about the school. It was at one of these kinds of informal meetings with parents that the idea came up to start an exercise club of parents, you know. Initially what I had thought was it would be nice for us to have one day a week when the parents could come in and just have a fireside chat with the principal. It started out that way. Then after two or three sessions like that I said, Look, we have a nice little group here, and the school district has the capacity to provide any kind of program, you know, if you get a group of people who are interestedin a specific program, they'll provide the training for it. Is there anything, you would like? And they suggested they would like to have a slimnastics class. And so we arranged for that and to it started right away I conducted the class for the first two or three sessions myself. I was the gym teacher. And we did it at a time when the gym was available, early in the morning, you know, before the the gym got started. And we ran it that way until I found a leader from among the mothers who had been a YWCA teacher herself and she took over the leadership. And that persisted for two years.

Eli: Did she get paid for that?

Bud: No. This is all voluntary. In fact, what they've done, this group has done, is they have conducted some fashion shows, some dances and with the proceeds they've given gifts to the school. So, you know, it's helped us out that way too. But it's done something else. It's kept a communication link open on a daily basis with parents. And it made available to us a ready supply of parents if we need them for help around the school.

Eli: So, there are latent advantages to this? Did you think of this as you were suggesting it in any way or was it . . .

Bud: When I was suggesting it I was thinking of in strictly a communication aspect of having people, giving people an opportunity to discuss their concerns about the school, making inputs, a way that we would deal with things in the preventive measure before, you know, parents would have to come in in a hot way.

Eli: But communication was one of the main concerns?

Bud: That was my primary concern. And this was just a little gimmick so to speak of getting that to come about, you know, one that was satisfactory. So it, we have a group of twenty or so parents who come in in the mornings. They walk their kids to school and after the kids come in then they go to the gym for a half hour, they have calisthenics and afterwards if there's some little chore we need done, like folding papers or whatever, counting out things, they hang around and help us out. And, as I said before, you know, in gratitude for our letting them use the building, they've conducted some programs, some money fund raising programs to try to pay us back. So that's been a helpful thing and that all fits in with my objective of promoting close school-parent relations and involvement.

Eli: Involvement of the community and the school. It strikes me that the school is much more than just school. It's a neighborhood institution.

Bud: It's a meeting place. Actually in the space of all that change that was taking place, it's the only institution that hasn't changed, you know, it's persisted through that. Basically the same. I mean the administration's been the same, our teachers have been basically the same, you know, all through these ten years. So, in many respects it represents the only lasting institution that's persisted through those ten years of change. And even the churches, as I've said before, have changed denominations, they've changed leadership. The businesses have changed and, you know, the political organization has changed.

Eli: And people are much more defensive in the neighborhood generally it seems from what you've told me. The community itself is really . . . but I imagine the school has become somewhat more defensive, too, in terms of like guarding itself from the outside and security.

Bud: Yes, I think the school has dealt with reality, you know. The neighborhood was rampaged by gangs and, you know, there was a lot of problems that way before and in response to that we wanted to make the school as safe refuge as possible. And those are precautions we've taken. Not that we've been victimized but we don't want to be victimized.

Eli: Refuge. That's an interesting word.

Bud: I see us as a refuge for the community too because so many of the things that people want in their neighborhood they seem to come to the school first to find out how we should go about it you know. Our very last campaign was to get another crossing guard and I got a committee together of interested mothers. I made sure they were all female because the man we were going to see was male and we went up to see Wilson Goode, the city managing director, and you know, I made sure I brought a pregnant mother along with me too so that's the degree to which I will try to preplan you know, but they do come to the school because they think the school shows them a sensible way of doing it and gets results.

Eli: The school seems to be a sort of rock in the community. A pillar.

Bud: Yes it is.

Eli: Support in the community itself where people come to it seeking

Bud: Advice and refuge.

Eli: Advice, refuge, information, all this. It's like a kind of mission, in a sense.

Bud: Yes. That's a good analogy.

Eli: I mean it's a place where people can go for help. Every school is not that way, you know.

Bud: Well, I mean I can't speak of that, you know, other schools. I think what has been responsible for that is that we've been pretty consistent, you know, we haven't really shifted programs from, you know, say ultra liberal to ultra conservative. We've been pretty much moving along with an even keel. The staff has been stable. We made a big effort to try to include effective concerns. We're not just teaching skills we're teaching children. And there's an awful lot of that among my staff. We're talking about feelings, we're talking about really getting close to these kids and knowing the kids. Developing friendships, you know. Which is important. I don't think my staff is perceived as ogres, you know, they're perceived more as trying . . . they're effective, they're getting jobs done and I think that the fact that they go the extra mile, they frequently call parents on the phone to consult with parents. They stay late. They'll even stay late with kids to give them extra help. They'll provide the parents with tips about . . . homework. Helpful things to do. The school itself conducts seminars for parents where they can come in and get some special training or something like that. So, there's a good feeling, you know, about the whole, you know, and all through this, the school's been stable. It's been this way, so parents know what to expect from the school. They know they're not going to get irratic kinds of judgments or behaviors or decisions. The expectations are laid out there for them.

Eli: Let's speak about staff for a moment.

Bud: So after the kids come in, I'll go over to the office to see whether there is anything pressing thing happening there and if there isn't then I'll make my tour through the school and try to visit each teacher just to poke my head in and say good morning and, you know, ask some little question or, that might pertain to them in particular. And that generally, you know, by the time you visit thirty classrooms, that's a couple hours shot right there. And if there are no other pressing meetings or things of that nature, then I'll go back down to the office and take care of some correspondence or some reports. Lunchtime, help supervise, you know, their lunch, all of our children eat in school. The afternoons are generally some sort of committee meeting, either in the school or outside the building somewhere. And that pretty much, you know, is a typical day. Scattered in there might be a visit from a parent or two either by my request or they've requested to come in so that the day is pretty, is a very busy one and I find that I have to leave a lot of my, the clerical work, for either after school is dismissed or before school opens in the morning. I just can't get to that during the course of the day generally. And most of the day is relating to people, either teachers or parents or visitors going through the building. And then I have two separate buildings so I have to try to spend some time in the other building. That's generally the way it goes.

Eli: So you come in, you arrive at about eight in the morning.

Bud: Right. I don't get out of there until . . .

Eli: You leave at about what time?

Bud: About five, a quarter to five, I guess.

Eli: I was talking to John Marcotte once and he was telling me that sometimes he and you were out at the playground at seven thirty, eight o'clock in the morning. Watching kids come and go.

Bud: You have to be because a lot of the children are sent to school because parents have to go to work and they leave home when the parents leave in the morning to go to work so there's no place for them to come, they have to come to school. And we don't open, officially open our school until ten after eight but a lot of children are there from seven thirty on. A lot of children come to that yard because they're going to board a bus to go to another school so we generally try to have somebody there in case they need some adult help.

Eli: And the parents see . . .

Bud: The parents see that, you know, it, the parents feel very, have no hesitancy about calling the school at all hours, you know, thinking that there's somebody going to be there staffing the phones.

Eli: It's a little bit their place.

Bud: Yes, it's their place, they can call at any time, they come in and visit any time. We practice an open-door policy. I don't stand on a tight calendar schedule so that if a parent expresses an urgency to see me, you know, I try to accommodate. If not, we'll try to set up an appointment for the very first possible time we can right after that if it's not urgent, you know.

Eli: You mentioned the fact that it's a relatively low income area. And lots of density and all that. Poverty. Single parent households. One woman with two or three kids is not unusual.

Bud: No.

Eli: Sometimes one, two or three women live in a house.

Bud: Sometimes it can be classified as an inner-city type of situation.

Eli: But now you have a breakfast program and a lunch program.

Bud: Right.

Eli: Do the kids have to pay for this?

Bud: No. This is the free subsidized government lunch that is provided to all children whose parents make an income that's below the poverty level. And all the parent has to do is substantiate that he is making a certain income and the children are eligible. We have 775 children who are eligible for that out of 1,100.

Eli: 750?

Bud: 775. That's quite a bit.

Eli: What's the amount that one has to be making?

Bud: I think it's gone up now to $6,500 a year for a family, you know. Of a family of three or four.

Eli: Usually when the man is present they don't qualify.

Bud: No. Well, it depends on what he's earning. But usually not.

Eli: That 750 students very likely comes from homes, single parent homes.

Bud: Right.

Eli: That's a pretty high number.

Bud: I think that's a typical family setup, single family dwellings.

Eli: 750 out of 1,100. That's quite a percentage.

Bud: The majority of kids come from impoverished homes. But they come to school well groomed, you know, and they come to school prepared so that I think that despite the income level I think the parents seem to have an interest in education and supporting the program because they send their kids prepared, they send their kids well-groomed and dressed, you know, it's, there's not a direct correlation there between poverty, you know, economic poverty and aspirational poverty, you know.

Eli: What do the kids eat in this breakfast and this lunch?

Bud: Well, the breakfast is generally has some kind of a either a fresh fruit or juice, fruit juice, milk and the kids prefer chocolate milk, and they would have something that would be considered the main thing, it might be a cereal, it might be oh, what do they call these, they look like chocolate cupcakes, like Tastykakes but they have a special name for them. They're like astro packs or something like that. Or it may be corn muffins, you know. Sometimes they have something that looks like, approximates an Egg McMuffin, you know, like a MacDonald's Egg MacMuffin. So, you know, it could be, it's not the same thing every day, it's something different each day. They have a kind of a ginger bread cookie, but it's a special kind, it's supposed to have special ingredients in it.

Eli: I could probably get the menu or something.

Bud: Yes, you can get that at school. That's a breakfast. A lunch, breakfast is served cold, you know, there's nothing that's heated there, but lunch is a hot lunch that is prepackaged, it comes to the school in these tin foil containers that have to be warmed in our microwave oven and that's usually a meat or fish or chicken with some vegetables and then they have some fruit and usually milk along with that. It's a pretty substantial, but the kids, they, naturally like all kids, certain ones have their favorites.

Eli: Not all of them take advantage of this program. Not all of those who are eligible take advantage of this program.

Bud: Well, they take advantage of it, but they, not all of them take advantage of the breakfast. For a variety of reasons, you know. One is that breakfast is served between eight, ten after eight in the morning until twenty of and they may not be willing to get to school that early, you know.

Eli: Even if it may mean eating breakfast or not?

Bud: Well, I'm sure they probably get something at home, you know. If they need it, I guess they would be there. We have about three hundred who avail themselves of it each morning. So roughly about half the eligible ones.

Eli: For lunch you get a higher percentage?

Bud: Everyone avails himself of lunch, but whether they actually eat it or not is another question. Some kids, even though they're eligible and take the free lunch, might find it more apetizing to grab a sandwich from somebody else or, you know what I mean?

Eli: Or bring lunch?

Bud: Or bring their own lunch. But the thing is that we're willing to feed everybody for breakfast and we do feed everybody for lunch. Now some kids bring their lunch from home but no one's permitted to leave the building during lunchtime. It's a closed lunch program.

Eli: This is an extra . . .

Bud: Inducement for parents.

Eli: This is very different from the situation you find in most, not most, but certainly the middle-class elementary schools. What about your, the people who work in your cafeteria and all, I have a sense that some of these people are right from the community. Some of the people are right from the neighborhood. They know the kids they serve, they know the families.

Bud: Oh sure. Well that's the design of that program, the aides that we use in the building.

Eli: Is that your . . .

Bud: No, this is the, initially, we didn't have a lunch program until perhaps five or six years ago. Prior to that time, we had to recruit aids to work in our instructional program and those aides that were aides that the principal selected, you know. Now the same idea permeated to the lunch program. They wanted us to recruit aides so obviously you go to the people that you know, the people who are your neighbors, you know. The people who work around the school, who had kids in the school. So although the idea was, you know, from someplace else, the particular people were the people we picked, you know. And, again, we tried to pick people who had that feeling for kids not mean types, people who will try to carry on the kinds of philosophical feelings we had about how you relate to kids, good effective relationships, you know. So they, too, are people who are interested in the kids' welfare. And what I've instructed them to do is to concentrate on the kids while they are there. Not worry about cleaning the floor or cleaning the tables or spillages and that sort of stuff. I like you to circulate and show the children how to unwrap their things, how to eat properly, use good manners and whatnot. The thing that I like, or the thing that I'm trying to do in all of my operations is to turn a lot of the operation back over to the people who are directly doing it so that, even in the cafeteria I would like the staff that works in the cafeteria to be able to handle the situation in the cafeteria. Then again in lots of instances the only time you would have control is when the principal himself is there or when the vice-principal is there and as soon as staff people are watching the place, that's not the case in our school. We've been able to train the, my nonteaching assistant, a black male who was, to be able to manage that whole cafeteria in a way that rewards positive behavior and, you know.

Eli: How is that? Can you describe what you mean?

Bud: Well, we have a system in our cafeteria that is based on a behavior modification idea where we give children prizes and awards for behavior we like to see exemplified and we conduct little programs, little awards when, on various things. For example, the kids come in and they line up properly and take their seats properly, that's noted, you know, and the kids win a certain amount of points for that. If they eat cleanly and the floor is not all messed up after they're done, that's noted and so many points for that. Then each day those children who you know, deserve it are given some little, some of these little gifts that they buy from Home and School Money, you know, little ten cent items, little novelty things. Then, he runs a monthly big award things where we might give them a basketball, give them, you know, something a little bit more substantial, a game or some sort. And the kids build up, you know, points for that. We try to do that in the classrooms, too, with, we have the first Friday of each month is called dress-up day and we want the kids to dress themselves up and we also want them to dress up the school and the room so we go about, a committee of the Home and School and myself, we go about the school on that day and we look to see which rooms are the cleanest, which rooms have the best decorations out and displays out, the way the kids look nice, the way the teacher looks nice. And we give that class a pennant to hang, you know, for the next month. A little flag. And it's little things like that where we give, where we recognize the positive aspects.

Eli: And this is your input? Your idea?

Bud: Yes, by and large. It's been my wish that our school would be an orderly place, a productive place, where there's a work atmosphere, you know. Where people are relating to kids in a nice way, they're not adversaries but they understand each other, support each other.

Eli:

Bud: Yes, where you don't have an office full of kids who are discipline problems, where, you know, you don't have confrontational at times. I think our school reflects that atmosphere.

Eli: Do you have very much confrontation?

Bud: No, hardly any at all, none at all, you know. You know we try, first of all, to use preventive measures, you know. Then we try to use a great deal of kindness and understanding and we realize that a lot of these things that might happen would be symptomatic of deeper problems so we try to get to the deeper problems. I think we have a truly professional staff, who try, first of all, try not to do the kinds of things that generage confrontation, embarrassing kids in public, and that sort of thing, and try to provide children with positive ways of shining, you know, of getting some ego trips, you know. And we have that, you know. At graduation time, prior to graduation, we have a day we call awards day. We give out over two hundred awards. We recognize the most trivial of things, you know. We give the kid a certificate, you know. That goes a long way, you know. We have, all through the year, we have various kinds of achievement awards and certificates that we give out to the kids, you know, as we're making progress. So the children have lots of ways of feeling a sense of accomplishment. They win prizes daily in the lunchroom. Win prizes monthly for good schools, you know, for a good looking classroom, good looking attire.

Eli: Would you say that this behavior modification orientation is pretty prevalent throughout the school? Would you, do you find . . .

Bud: Throughout our school?

Eli: . . . in a big way?

Bud: Oh, I think so, yes. I think . . .

Eli: Positive reinforcement?

Bud: . . . positive reinforcement, that's the approach that we try to encourage all of our teachers to take and the evidence that that takes place is the expenditures of money the teachers make on things, you know, they give me petty cash receipts for ribbons and certificates and, you know, trophies and things of that nature, so . . .

Eli: They really get into this.

Bud: Yes, they really get into that.

Eli: They really enjoy that.

Bud: Oh, sure.

Eli: Enjoy giving prizes and awards.

Bud: Oh, yes.

Eli: Let me ask you this. We talked about, it's just probably a ludicrous fad, before, but really interesting, but I wanted to just ask you about staff. What, how do you recruit, how do you go about recruiting, how do you go about weeding the staff, how do you go about weeding out the wrong kinds of people and all that? How do you get a staff that you're satisfied with and pleased with?

Bud: I'm a pretty direct guy and I think that it's very difficult for me to conceal my real feelings, you know, and I think that to some degree that's a weakness on my part, but I think people pretty much get the drift of how, you know, I'm reacting to what they're doing so it isn't long if people who are on the staff know the kinds of things that please me, that satisfy me, that I see that are commendable, you know, that I feel good about. And I think that that's part of it, I think they, through attrition, you know, you grow toward each other and people who have mutual kinds of interests and mutual things that satisfy them. So some of the staff we've come together that way because we share a common value system. They're the kind of teachers that I appreciate, that I see doing things that I appreciate. And I've made them feel that way, you know, complimentary. Likewise, those who haven't I've made them feel that way either by my looks or by my direct confrontation, you know. I've had quite a few people that I've had to tell bluntly, you know, that, you know, after we've given them a chance to make adjustments. We just aren't going to make it together.

Eli: For example, can you give me an example, a story about this kind of a situation?

Bud: Oh, sure. Well, one of the most recent ones happened just about a year and a half ago when we had a big shuffle of teachers, and I inherited staff members from another school because of the desegregation move and, you know, they shifted a lot of people around.

Eli: What year is this?

Bud: Just about, not this past January, the January before.

Eli: 1978?

Bud: '78, yes. So I inherited a fellow who was erratic, there is no other word for it, you know? After seeing him work, you know, and the erratic way he related to kids, the kids were, you know, didn't know where he was coming from, I had to call him in for conferences and offered him a great deal of help and assistance, had some of my staff go in and help him, had conferences with him myself to try to give him some helpful suggestions. His wife, who was a teacher, even came in and took over the class to see what she could do for one day.

Eli: What did he do specifically?

Bud: Well, he was a little distant, you know, like he had that far-removed look, like he, the kids would take advantage of him because of that, you know, he was insensitive to what was going on in the room, his mind would be distant and these kids would be doing all kinds of things, disruptive things, you know. One day he went out to lunch and never came back, you know. Things of that nature in other words. Really erratic, you never knew what to expect from him. So, you know, I had to bring him up what we call a 204, it's a disciplinary report. And, he's been suspended from the system. There was another fellow I inherited at that time who couldn't manage a class, didn't have these effective kinds of ways of dealing with kids I was talking about and likewise I wrote him up for, you know. So these were just within the past half, year and a half.

Eli: What did you, can you recount that conversation that you had with him. You must have had several conversations?

Bud: Oh we didn't have one, we had several.

Eli: Could you recount some of those leading up to the suspension?

Bud: The first conversations you have are pretty much just things that you've observed that have happened that, you know, you offer, perhaps offer some help to try to correct. Maybe the way he was standing in front of the room at the time he was writing at the board, instead of turning your back completely to the children, you know, do it in a semi-turned fashion so you can still, you know, have the children sense that you're still aware of what's going on. So the first conversations were basically helpful kinds of conversations to try to pinpoint things that he was doing that maybe if they were done a little bit differently might alleviate some of the problems that occurred. The later conversations were more in the nature of, now, you've been persisting in doing it this way and you've been advised not to, you know, you've been encouraged that you try something else and you haven't. Is there any problem, any further problem, what else can we do, is there something else that you need. And, then after the third time, you begin to take a more direct approach and say, unless things are different then we're going to have to, I'm just going to have to refer you for transfer or refer you for disciplinary action, whatever. And, by that time, they're pretty much, if they're unable to accomplish what you're, you know, you've said you'd like to see, they're pretty much getting themselves ready to be shipped out somewhere. But all of this is just in saying that there are obviously, when you're dealing with a lot of different people, and people are going to be together for a long time, there are a lot of different reasons why people come together and stick together. One reason is that those who have stuck are those that I've found satisfactory. Those that we haven't we've somehow they've . . .

Eli: So you really, you sort of believe in this reward and punishment kind of philosophy using positive/negative reinforcement to this and that the people that don't measure up you don't escalate . . .

Bud: And I think even teachers look for that too.

Eli: Let me go back a bit. We talked about 1969 when you came aboard. Shortridge. When you came into the system as a principal, as a new principal, you must have had a series of tests relied on by you, by staff, and like that. In other words, you probably had to get in their and assert yourself and to clean out certain things that you didn't approve of and get it to be more like you wanted it to work. Can you describe that period when you were just starting to take over? And some of the techniques, some of the things you went through in order to get that ship in shape, so to speak.

Bud: Right. Well, the first, my first meeting with the staff when I took over was pretty much a meeting of my laying out what were my expectations and the way I wanted to see things done. And I explained, at that time, I still recall, I explained in very specific detail even how a teacher should escort her class up the steps. What I wanted to see, you know? And what I expected in the nature of the kids lining up out in the schoolyard and what I wanted to see so that, there had been a period just prior to my coming when I think that things had deteriorated a little bit as far as management, you know, student management. So that I was already prepared when I was ready to make this talk about what had been the situation that was causing people some grief.

Eli: What did you say? Did you go about . . .

Bud: I had met with my, you know, some staff members, over the summer and I got the drift of, you know, from them of what were some of the things that they wanted to see corrected. So that when I spoke to the whole staff I was able to lay out specifics that were pretty much on target.

Eli: Did you take old way and . . .

Bud: Yes. Well, I outlined what was my philosophy about education, you know, my feelings about what a teacher's role is, what a teacher is expected to do and what you are expected to do as a colleague, you know.

Eli: Can you lay out what you . . . that philosophy . . .

Bud: Well, one thing, for example, is that this school is our school, it's not my school, it's not any one particular persons school, but it's our school and whatever results as a consequence of our pooling our work together, pooling our resources together. I understand that there are teachers who consider their classroom only their, that class only theirs, and they don't get involved with next door, or if they see a child doing something that's wrong, if it's not a member of their class, they don't say anything. That's not my idea of what a teacher is about, you know, you're a teacher of all the children here. And I expect you, you know, if you see a child doing wrong in your presence, you're responsible to do something about that. So that was one of the things, you know. Trying to get the idea that this was, you know, our school, our school philosophy, you know. There was something in there about the little cliques that emerge, you know what I mean. I think that was the reason for my talking about our school kind of a thing, different groups getting together, polarized units.

Eli: This was when you first . . .

Bud: My first week there.

Eli: You could see the different groups?

Bud: Yes, no one wanted anything to do with . . .

Eli: How would you define these groups? Could you?

Bud: Well, there were some that were together because of age, you know, like a few young teachers, female teachers were together. There were some who had come over because of an integration policy. They kind of stuck together. So they had different, some were the old, old timers, you know, who were, had been there and considered themselves an elitist group. But they what that initial talk was was my effort to try to set straight what my philosophy was and also adjust myself to what had been related to me as specific weaknesses that had cropped up because of mismanagement before, you know.

Eli: What were those weaknesses?

Bud: Well, the children not lining up when the bell rang, for example. Kids coming into the building noisily, going up and down. A lot of tardiness, lateness, you know, on the part of kids and staff. Feeling that the, we were now turning over the helm to parents. Now that the community was changing the parents were getting more vocal, you know, and the feeling that we were, the school was going to surrender to parents. So, some of those things were presented as the problems that were beginning to become apparent . . .

Eli: In the annex building? In the other . . .

Bud: Specific, some about specific people and what they do and what they don't do, you know, look out for this one, look out for that one. You get some of that when, you know, have a discussion with staff people.

Eli: Can you give me an example of somebody who just was wrong?

Bud: Was wrong?

Eli: That helped to inspire this kind of talk or whatever? I mean I'm just trying to get the details that helped you to feel that indeed this talk was necessary. Address some of these problems.

Bud: The person who was to be my assistant had been a person who had been in the intern program with me, had already been there for a couple years working as the assistant for the previous principal so . . .

Eli: Who is that? Is he still there with you or?

Bud: No. His name is Don Shaw. He's not there any longer, but he was my vice principal for about five years. But he had been there before me, so I met with him to get some information from him. Then I met with the, you know, the principal who gave me some other things. Met with the school community coordinator who told, you know, told me something about the community. You know, a few people like that. And from that I developed my own perception of what was happening.

Eli: These people gave you the background?

Bud: Yes. They helped me frame my talk. The topics on which to talk. What was happening which basically gave me the. Now I can't remember all the specifics, we're going back twelve years, but basically it was a meeting after I was done I felt like I had gotten the message across because I heard comments, Oh, this is great, this sounds like what we need, you know, that sort of stuff. It was a, you know, from my perception of it, it was well received, whatever I said, you know. And I think they felt comfortable that they were getting a principal who was strong and knowledgeable and supportive, you know?

That's the feeling I wanted to give, you know, that I was an experienced person, I, you know, I could handle myself and that sort of thing. I wanted them to feel secure with my leadership.

Eli: Did you invoke your experiences at the other school, previous school?

Bud: Some of it, yes. And I think that some people on the staff had known of me from, you know, my work in the school district and probably got some word around that way too. So, my recollection of that meeting was a very well received one, one where I got my task done of assuring them that I was going to. . . . And then I worked hard trying, you know, trying to keep my promise, you know, all through that. And it, we were moving along working hard, trying to set up annexes and new classes all that time. Then, toward the end of that first year is when we had that confrontation with the parents over the kid who was supposed to be, you know, psyched. And she couldn't accept it.

Eli: This is, oh yes.

Bud: Remember that? That, you know, that was like May of the first year.

Eli: Your first confrontation?

Bud: Yes.

Eli: You didn't have to reprimand a teacher or any staff member during that time did you?

Bud: Not that I can recall that first year, no.

Eli: So, people just sort of listened to what you . . .

Bud: Yes, we . . .

Eli: . . . what you laid on them?

Bud: Yes, I think, well, I didn't lay anything on them that was unusual or, you know, extraordinary or anything like that. I tried to really put into action that team work feeling, you know, I'm not going to ask you to do anything that I wouldn't want to do myself, you know.

Eli: How did you follow-up? How did you follow this up with behavior? Did you then simply make a conscious effort to act as together as . . .

Bud: Oh, sure, I would make myself visible, I would go in and demonstrate, constantly demonstrate lessons, I would be physically present when, whenever there was any questions about some kind of duty that the teacher had to perform, like supervising the yard at recess, or supervising lunches, you know, supervising dismissals, or what. So that I tried to demonstrate by my physical presence and by my actions, you know, that I wanted to be a colleague. In our faculty meetings whenever we had discussions, we were always looking at it from the standpoint of how can we do this a little better, you know, not a criticism kind of thing but a positive kind of view of it, you know.

Eli: Collective.

Bud: Collective. How can we put our heads together to solve this particular problem.

Eli: What did you, did you have any resentment that you know of, among the staff people? How about the old guard, how about the older . . .

Bud: There weren't, there is, as I said, two or three people retired one of the old guard who was a counselor, I was very supportive of, she was very supportive of me. Another one of the old guard who was a very good teacher, you know, she accepted me because she appreciated I was coming from a curricular background as opposed to something else, you know.

Eli: Curricular background?

Bud: Well, I, you know, I had been a teacher, I had been a collaborator. My forte was curricular. So she identified with me as a teacher more so as a manager.

Eli:

Bud: Yes, right, a businessman or, you know . . .

Eli:

Bud: Yes, somebody from phys ed or something like that. But she had a great deal of respect for me and I for her, you know, for what she was able to do technically, you know.

Eli: So you call yourself a curriculum man.

Bud: Basically, yes. I think that's my forte.

Eli: That's interesting.

Bud: That's how I view myself.

Eli: That's how people perceive you.

Bud: And I want them to perceive me that way. I have my own thesis about that. I think that in, among teachers, if you're supervising teachers, they're more inclined to listen to you or to accept what you say if they sense that you were a teacher yourself or you are, you know, you know where you're coming from. I think it's important for them to have a perception of you as a teacher not just as a manager. That's when you're talking to them as teachers. Now they certainly want to be able to respect you as a manager, too, who can take all resources you're, you know, supposed to handle and do the best you can with it. But they would hope you're not doing that arbitrarily or in the dark, but you're doing it with some basis in curriculum philosophy.

Eli: So there's a happy blending of these two attributes.

Bud: Oh, yes. But, my, I, there were some confrontations the first year but nothing major, you know. Just calling people in to alert them that I've noted certain things that I wanted corrected, you know. There were some parents that we had to have, you know, some discussions with because they weren't willing to accept certain things, you know, kids failing and kids having to be psyched. That was a very delicate thing in those years, you know, to suggest to a parent that, you know, we were going to perform a psychological exam for your child. It's a very threatening thing. To some parents it meant that you were saying their child was less than normal, you know.

Eli: It was very difficult to suggest it to them without really . I imagine the black teachers had an easier time.

Bud: Well, that was in my thinking, too, that's why I asked specifically for a black counselor at the time, you know.

Eli: Was that borne out, I mean, was it really true or . . .

Bud: Not with him particularly because of his own personality, you know, but it, my next one, the one that I have now is a female black and she's very good technically, she knows her field, but I think she has difficulty relating to the blacks because she has a supercilious attitude. She's the wife of a very prominent physician, she has, you know, very strong white middle-class values, and sometimes projects some of that onto the blacks who feel very, she makes them feel a little inferior, you know.

Eli: Have you found you have to deal with that

Bud: Yes, I've had to deal with it quite often. Technically she's very good. Now, I try to make up for her other weaknesses by handling some of that part by myself, you know, the human part of it.

Eli: Do you say things to her?

Bud: We have discussions sometimes. But, pretty hard to change a personality.

Eli: How do you handle something like that?

Bud: Very carefully.

Eli: I mean how do you handle that as a problem. How do you go, I mean I know it's a very delicate situation. You have to handle it gingerly. But there must be some kind of art to doing that. You must have some way of going about dealing with that kind of problem.

Bud: Yes, I think, with her, I've been able to develop a really good rapport, really good relationship, so that when we speak we, you know, she knows it's really in a non-threatening way, I'm not talking with her to take her job away from her, I'm talking with her to, about a problem of communications that she has, you know. So we're not dealing with her, we're dealing with the way she communicates. And, it's like not, you know, I don't disagree with you but I disagree with what you're doing, you know, and I think she understands that. And she is, remember, she's a counselor who's had special training in being able to take stuff and take criticism, you know. So it's a little easier relating with her than it would be relating with, you know, somebody who hasn't had that training. So, I think we, I try to handle it as non-threateningly as possible, as maturely as possible and . . .

Eli: Has she been receptive?

Bud: I think she's, let's say she's been made aware of it. Being receptive is another question, it's a question of having, you know, this is really a part of her real true personality, her make up.

Eli: I get the sense that you approach your staff as people who have to be trained by you, in some sense. Not always, but if there is any kind of problem, then you take the diplomatic tack of coming to show them a better way.

Bud: I think that's one of my responsibilities. I view myself as the father of the school.

Eli: But it's a slow thing with you.

Bud: It's a slow thing.

Eli: I get the sense that you go about working on people. Is that accurate?

Bud: I think that's accurate.

Eli: You work on people.

Bud: Well, I work with them.

Eli: With them and on them. I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. I'm just trying to get out the . . .

Bud: No, no. I think the biggest, I view my job as getting others to do what I want them to do. Now that, obviously, that has to be done in different ways with different people. But my biggest task is motivating them to want to feel like what I want them to do is really what they want to do themselves. And that's the trick. As a consequence I, you know, I guess the way I sometimes accomplish that by, you know, telling them this is the way it's got to be, you know. Sometimes I just let them know how I would go about it, you know, and take it from there. Other times we discuss it and see, if together, we can put our heads together and what would be a sensible way to accomplish it, but it's true, I view myself as having the ultimate responsibility there for whatever happens and if I see something is going on that's going to lead to some problems, I feel it's my duty to instruct them, you know, we better do it this way.

Eli: Right. So really how does peer pressure come in here or does it come in at all, in the support of your directives. Do they, do the other people sort of fall in line and follow suit or do they take all of their lead from you? There are a couple ways to approach that.

Bud: Yes. I exploit peer pressure to a great extent, you know. I'll give you a case in point. When they were talking about implementing the PCRP, I brought together a cadre of people who are key people, not only key because they, of what they know, but key because of who they know. So I brought together people who may have been respected by their peers because they're, you know, for one reason or another, you know, they have a close colleague relationship or they might do things, you know, a certain way, the peers appreciate. So, when I brought together this cadre, then I used them as apostles so to speak to get the word out. And I found that was a lot easier to do than my going directly and telling somebody I want you to do this, you know. So the pressure came from the peers. I also use student pressure, not just peer pressure.

Eli: How do you do that?

Bud: Well, we try to run programs that get the kids excited. Now once the kids get excited and turned on it's pretty hard for a teacher to go against the flow. See. So, whenever we're going to get into something new or something I want to see done, we'll start an ad campaign ahead of time to get the kids all psyched up on it and then the kids, you know, they want to be a part of this, they want to be in the competition, in the contest or in the program. And it's pretty hard for a teacher to be able to, you know, not go along with it.

Eli: How do you get this ad campaign started? What, can you give me an example?

Bud: I can give you a specific.

Eli: Yes. Tell me exactly how you . . . is it something you want done, how do you go about getting it done?

Bud: I wanted the whole school to go into what we call sustained silent reading in the morning. That's SSR, you know. Now that meant that, you know, I had to get everybody's cooperation to do it willingly, you know, on their own because I couldn't be all over the whole school at one time. So what we did, we started this ad campaign by promoting a lot of apprehension on the part of kids about Mr. SSR. Mr. SSR is coming. Are you ready? Who is Mr. SSR? If you can get who Mr. SSR is, we'll give you, you know, such and such a prize, you know, you can win the campaign. Okay. We did this for three or four weeks. Posted throughout the school. You know, little caracatures of Mr. SSR. Pictures and all. Then I got my reading teacher to dress up in a mortarboard, a cap and gown and I built an egghead when you come to school I'll show you the egghead. We dressed him up as Mr. SSR. He was an egghead character with mortarboard and formal gown, you know. And he went around the rooms, making announcements, SSR is coming on October 22nd, you know, be ready for SSR. So the kids . . .

Eli: Just one question. How did you get him to do this? Was he just really agreeable to do it, no problem, you sort of knew him well enough to know he'd be interested in doing it?

Bud: No. Let me go back. First I had this notion I wanted to do something. Then, in my thinking about how I should approach it, I decided to get together with some of my key staff members to discuss it.

Eli: Key staff members.

Bud: Yes. Okay. Now, he's my reading teacher but he's one of my, this is in the area of reading so he would be a logical person to have on this committee, you know, to talk about how we should proceed. Then, other members of the committee were those people I thought might have some kind of influence with their peers, you see, in one way or another. So, it was at the committee meeting that we decided to take this approach. And then we decided who was going to take roles for what aspects of it. And, you know, he volunteered to take that. But it was as a consequence of our discussing it at one of our pre-planning meetings.

Eli: So you've got your key people, huh?

Bud: I got my key people in. And they were key for various reasons. Like I said. They weren't just key because they had a title, they were key because of how I, they were going to be a network of dissemination. And had some role they could play in that. So, after we did this for a few weeks of his going around, you know. We made announcements over our public address system, I had these placards posted around the school. Then we, the kids built up a great deal of interest in it, you know. And they started applying pressure on the teachers, you know, about are we going to be a part of that campaign, are we going to be in it? See? So then we had to decide other things, the committee had to decide what would be the best time of the day to do this, when we could get total school support, what, you know, what should it include, what kind of materials should we have available for all the teachers to use, how do we alert parents to what was going on so that they would, you know, get their support too, what on-going kinds of supports would teachers need, you know, what things, what kind of an environment would we need around the school in order to support that kind of thing. We'd need quiet. Do we answer telephones or don't we answer telephones. Do visitors who also come into the school also have to read quietly during that time. Do we close the doors and don't let anybody in or what? You know. So a lot of these decisions had to be made in the committee meetings, you know. And then we shared that with the faculty so that at faculty meetings prior to our getting into it, you know, reports came from these people on the committee and myself, you know, about plans we were making and grade group meetings were set up so they could work out the refinements to it. The support of other people was enlisted, you know, like the librarian and Home and School president for other things we might have needed, you know. So all of these things were done prior and then you see with that underground network working to talk positively about it when they're at lunch or when they're in their little meetings, you know, there was somebody handy who could point to the positive characteristics of it when somebody was ready to attack it, you see. You know what I mean.

Eli: So you've got your little team at work.

Bud: Always. There's always, I believe in planning before the eventuality so that you try to take all the necessary precautions and steps before time as much as possible. So that, you know, I gues to that degree you might call me Machievellian. I think it's important for me to try to think through what would be some of the obstacles, what would be some of the pitfalls. And then try to obviate against those. So, you know, very little that happens there happens by accident. It happens by design. And to the best we can think about all the elements of that design ahead of time the better off we're going to be. So, you know, I believe, I'm talking about mild pressure now, of peers, and mild pressure from colleagues. I'm not talking about, you know, cut-throat kind of stuff that, mild competition. So we run contests and we run all kinds of awards to get the kids enthused and then they in turn get their teachers enthused. Now we had another case was that, specific, was that after we launched Mr. SSR we had everybody reading silently in the mornings. Then I wanted to introduce the second critical experience from the PCRP. And that's, you know, responding to literature. So the committee discussed how we were going to get into that, you know. All along we want to make it as least threatening as possible and we want to get as much support as possible. So we decided we were going to use student pressure again and this time we were going to have response to literature take the form of a young lady who's going to marry Mr. SSR. So she was Miss RTL. And we actually had, during one of our lunchtimes, we had a double-ring ceremony, a marriage ceremony where my speech teacher, dressed up in, you know, bridal outfit. Mr. SSR was in his attire. I was

Mr. Goodbook and we performed the wedding ceremony. Exchanged the rings, big cardboard rings and we had a photographer there to take pictures. That was by AA. He was a press photographer. We wrote it up and the trick about that was that, how we were going to get the classes involved now, was that if you and your class want to come to the wedding ceremony, the wedding feast, the reception, then you would have to figure out a way of having your class demonstrate some response to literature. Either in the form of a play, in the form of a choral reading, in the form of some, you know, some dramatization, you know, whatever. You have to do that as your gift, your present, to the bride and groom. When you give them, when you promise to give them the present, then we'll give you a wedding invitation, reception invitation. So on another day we had a get-together in the gym, all the classes in there, and those classes that were invited had to do something for the rest of the assemblage. And we had pretzels and cookies and juice. That was the wedding reception. But you see, it was a way of getting the classes involved through the kids. So once you do that it's pretty hard for the teachers to back out and say they don't want to be a part of a campaign, you know. I don't know how we got onto this subject, but, except,

Eli: It's good, it's good. Management of staff.

Bud: Yes, it's management of staff. It's manipulation of people, really, but it's in a non-threatening way, a mild way and one that shows my active leadership all the time, never once did I say we wanted this done, but, you know, my other interest was to always show them that I was active in my interest and active in my participation, you know. I wanted to always be visible throughout this. So even now when we have children giving their written creative writing presentations, they come to my office each morning and five nine fifteen, after sustained silent reading is finished, we follow that with our morning announcements of, you know, management announcements. Following that I have a child come and read his or her creative writing over the public address system for the whole school. And the kids just love this, you know, they, what they do is write something in their room and it's not edited or anything, you know, just written. It's their own creative work. They show it to my reading teacher who gives them a calendar date when they can, you know, appear over public address and read it out loud for the rest of the school. That shows that, you know, in my judgment, that shows the front office is supporting this particular, you know, classroom activity. And all through I've tried to do that, you know, show my support, my endorsement for these things that, you know, that basically I want to see them done anyway. But my being active in them and giving continuous support reaffirms that to the teachers that, you know, that I'm behind it, I'm still interested in it. That's been helpful.

Eli: That's good.

Bud: This is tasty.

Eli: Pardon.

Bud: This is tasty.

Eli: Yes, it is. Well, how do get the parents when you deal with staff in a sense trying to get them to do what you need them to do? How do you go about getting the parents to do it?

Bud: I try to use the same idea, work through other parents you know. Well, on this committee . . .

Eli: So you have key parents?

Bud: Yes, on this committee I had two key parents who were part of that cadre and, you know, they're people that we respect and we listen to their input as well and try to utilize them to help disseminate some of the information. We have written communications we send home to parents but I think the biggest push is word of mouth, from parent to parent, you know. And then we try to get them involved actively, too. We created what we call a swap shop and the parents each morning a parent from the Home and School, each Wednesday morning, once a week, has the responsibility of staffing our swap shop cart. Now that's a cart of books that kids trade, you know. You bring one, you take one, you know. And this is something they have a lot of interest in. They feel a part of an on-going program. And we run these seminars, these training seminars, on Wednesday afternoons to help them see all the different aspects that go into the reading program. We, I think there's a lot to be said about the kinds of communications that go between the teacher and the parents at the beginning of the year. I encourage my teachers to send an informal type letter where they outline their aspirations, their objectives for the year, the ways parents can help, give their phone number, you know, so that they're making that initial gesture of openness, you know. We have, monthly, we have what we call parent teas. Each teacher is encouraged to have these informal teas with the parents of their kids. We provide the cookies and the tea and the coffee and we release the teacher to just sit and chat with those parents informally about what's going on. They keeps them up on their toes. Our track record has been pretty good so, because we've had, we've been demonstrating success, that, in turn, is regenerating more interest on the part of parents, you know. And, like I say, we, the word of mouth has been a big asset to us.

Eli: You're really sort of making use of the community network in a sense. Which is very important really. A lot of people don't understand . . . kids involved . . . the school. What you're suggesting, what's important to all this, is that indeed you have to get through to the parents, you have to get through to the teachers . . .

Bud: Oh, sure.

Eli: But you must be able to, I mean . . . you have to deal with teachers, parents, kids.

Bud: There's a fourth group at least. There's another group at least, another group. That's upper administration. I still have to, I'm not totally autonomous where I can do anything and everything. I still have to be responsive to upper administration, you know.

Eli: People . . .

Bud: Right, central administration. So there's at least four groups.

Eli: But with these kids you must have ways of getting them to get at these parents as well. In other words, . . .
it's a circle really.

Bud: Oh, sure. Kids basically love competitive kinds of things. They love, if they feel there's a, like they're in there competing there's a chance for them to get a prize or award, they're going to carry that home and, you know, they, teachers put notices in their notebooks. I send letters home, you know. The Home and School has a vehicle of communication, you know. They send letters as well as they have a monthly newsletter, you know. Things get written up. I make sure that no matter how trite, we get some kind of publicity in the community newspaper, you know. So, it keeps our, keeps people thinking great things are still happening, you know, in our school. Having these staff people who live in the community, you know, like the aides and some of the teachers, that's an important means of communication, you know.

Eli: How many teachers live in the community? What percentage?

Bud: That's a small percentage because I have a very large staff but I have about four who live in the immediate vicinity.

About another ten live close enough but they live in, on the other side of the creek in Yeadon, which is a little, you know, nicer neighborhood. I would say about a dozen of them live fairly close to the school, very close to the school, very close.

Eli: That's very important.

Bud: Now, you talk about the aides. All the aides live in the community so I have a crew of about twenty aides who all live in the community, you know.

Eli: There are about twenty aides and sixteen teachers?

Bud: Yes, yes. The twenty aides all live in the community and about a dozen teachers live in

Eli: . . .

Bud: Oh, yes. And then you have, then in addition to that, oh, let me see, I wanted to mention something else and it went right out of my mind.

Eli: I said cadre.

Bud: Yes, and I was thinking of cadre.

Eli: Staff members?

Bud: Oh, yes. I have at least a half a dozen children of teachers who attend as students in my school. And I think that, indirectly or subtlely or what, is an endorsement of the school's program if you can have children of your own teachers who attend that school. You know. And I think parents view that too as a plus, you know, for the school.

Eli: It's a real source of esteem.

Bud: Yes, right, in other words if you, as a teacher, are willing to send your kid to that school, then, you know, then you feel safe enough for your own kid it's got to be good enough for my kid, too. So there are a lot of different barometers that the parents use. There are some that we exploit in order to get the information out to parents and get their support. We, the parents that we have working there are people by and large who have a very positive attitude about our school so when they speak to other parents, they're going to be talking pretty positively about what's happening. And I don't think it's fabricated or concocted, it's a genuine opinion, you know, and parents see that these people work there six hours a day. If anybody's going to know what's going on there they certainly are. And if I, you know, I'm constantly reminding people, too, that that's part of our responsibility too. It's better not to say anything at all then to say something negative, you know. So, if you don't have anything good to say about us, then don't say anything, you know, but if you do have something good to say about us then, you know, shout it to the house tops, you know.

Eli: So, in a sense, the, there's a way that you must deal with the administration as well. You deal with these three elements very effectively it seems and undoubtedly this has an impact on the programs that you support and all that.

Bud: Oh, sure. Nothing is . . .

Eli: . . . have to negotiate a deal with and . . .

Bud: That's true. But see once it's a cyclical thing, you know, it's a spiral thing. Once you experience some success, then they're pretty apt to go along with what you suggest, you know. They're not going to get rid of success, you know. So that it gets easier and easier for me to have my own way, you know, because we've been demonstrating success with our methods. And I've found historically that if you don't bother them they pretty much leave you alone. So, if they're not getting telephone calls about things being messed up down there, if they're not getting complaints, then you're not going to really hear from them at all, you pretty much can, but you still have, you know, . . .

Eli: Still have to deal with them.

Bud: You still have to deal with them and you can't, you know, you can't ignore it entirely. You have to weigh, you know, what would it mean in any instance to do it your way or to do it the way they're suggesting. I've always found that if you could always broaden your base of support, you have nothing to worry about in any quarter. So that my, one of my reasons for wanting to have a strong Home and School Association, a strong parent support, is that my feeling like I can get anything I want done as long as I have them on my team. If they're willing to go with me, we'll make any argument anywhere and pretty much be heard.

Eli: But you must have that broad base of support?

Bud: Right. And nobody's going to mess with me either, you know.

I think the other way, like what happened to Joe Williams, he didn't have that broad base of support so he became the victim. But I would think it would be very difficult for central administration to move me if I had strong parent support insisting that . . .

Eli: That's so important, I think that's so important to, having the commitment . . . of students but the meetings, the . . .

Bud: Well, I'll give you another instance where

Eli: . . . the stores, all that, I see that as all interrelated in some way.

Bud: Another instance that just happened maybe about two and a half years ago that proves the point of strong parental support and there was one teacher, in a first grade class, who was insisting on using her own reading material and not the one we were endorsing at the school. After I went through all of the, you know, all of the discussions with her about the necessity of continuity and all that, she still was insisting on using her own material. When I went on observations in the class I saw evidences of the material still there being used, you know. And our relationship then changed from one of where I was then encouraging her, you know, to demanding and then it got worse and worse to where she then tried to get the parents of the children in her class together against me. So I called all those parents in and I had an open discussion with them about children's scores in the other classes, the way we were moving, and my premise that we were moving that way because we had a contiguous program that there was continuity from grade to grade, and that there was, we weren't causing any confusion with the kids, you know. And I laid the argument out to those parents to, you know, convince them. And, to where, now she was black and she was also getting some confederates who were, you know, strong, relatives, you know, who tried to disenfranchise me and that was another victory that I was able to win because I had strong parental support, you know. I was able to convince them of the logic in our program, you know. And those parents, you know, swung with me. Thank God, you know, but she could have very easily have gone, with the support of those thirty people, by giving them a whole bunch of, you know, that's your child's teacher, she's going to go give a cock and bull story about the principal doesn't want her to have the proper material your kid needs to learn, you know. That's what she was telling them, you know. But thank God I was able to win that battle.

Eli: It's so interesting really when you think about, people don't have that support. Right up against and have to eat crow.

Bud: That's right. I have a dossier on her, I'll show you when you come to school. That thick.

(C)

SHORTRIDGE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: TEACHER-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS

Monroe Watkins

I. Introduction 1

II. The School 2

- A. The Physical Plant and Its Surroundings 2
- B. Staff 3
- C. Collaborating Teachers 5
  - 1. Selection 5
  - 2. Teacher Profiles 5
  - 3. Similarities and Contrasts 8
- D. Policy and Program at Shortridge 9
  - 1. Policy on Literacy 9
  - 2. The Academics Plus Program 9
    - a. Descriptive Overview
    - b. Official View
    - c. What Counts as Involvement

III. Ethnographic Observation of Classroom and Teachers. 12

- A. Getting Started 12
- B. Teacher Concerns 12
  - 1. Homework 12
  - 2. Television 16
  - 3. Reading 17
  - 4. Cleaniness and Respect 18
- C. Communicating Expectations 22
  - 1. The Issues 22
  - 2. A Parent Tea 24
  - 3. A Mock School Day 26
- D. What Counts as Involvement 29

IV. Ethnographic Observation of Families 30

- A. Community 30
- B. Selection of Families 30
- C. Initial Meeting With Parents 31

D. Parents Sketches 33

1. Involved Parents 33
2. Mildly Involved Parents 39
3. Discussion 43

E. Issues of Parent Involvement 45

1. Homework 46
2. Television 52
3. Reading 53
4. Coming to School Well Dressed, Well Fed and Well Rested 54
5. Values Training 55

F. Home and School Relationship 56

1. Teacher Assumptions 56
2. Effects of Academic Plus 58
3. Past vs. Future 58

G. Communication of School Expectations 59

V. Conclusions 61

I. INTRODUCTION

> If we could educate the parents, we'd have a good education system on our hand. Because if every teacher could evaluate their good groups and their poor groups, the low achievers and their high achievers....what is the difference? The parental cooperation is the difference. You take a low achieving class of thirty-three children, half of the parents don't come up for the report cards, half the parents can't be found, half the parents sign anything, half the parents accept anything....what is the difference? It's not the children, it's the parents.

The above comments, made by one of the teachers who is a participant in this descriptive study, express the sentiments of many teachers regarding the importance of parental influence and the role that parents should play in helping their children acquire literacy skills.

Teachers inevitably form definite notions about parents and families. For instance, parents do or don't help with and check homework; parents' failure to pick up report cards when scheduled shows lack of concern and, vice versa, careful adherence to such expectations shows concern; parents let children watch too much television when they should be reading; parents were more responsive in years gone by; and parents don't spend enough time talking to their children. These generalizations affect communication between home and school, the degree of cooperation that is possible between the two and the way teachers relate to children.

A great deal has been written about the school's role in promoting student literacy, but little has been written and less is known about the family's real role in fostering children's literacy skills despite the widely held belief among educators that in order for the school to be effective in promoting literacy, there must be a partnership between home and school and parents must have a clear understanding of what role they must play in literacy development. Indeed, in many schools, as is the case in Shortridge, the amount and nature of parent involvement in their children's schooling and the parents' attitude, as perceived by the school are explicitly stated as criteria for evaluating children.

It was in this context that the present research evolved. Teachers, when questioned about the major problems they faced in the teaching of language arts skills, frequently named the non-supportive attitude of parents. Taking this concern as a starting point, I set out to examine teacher expectations of parents and their perceptions of parental involvement in schooling, on the one hand. Then, on the other hand, I looked at parent perceptions of school expectations and, through ethnographic investigation, examined how the two meshed or conflicted.

Our underlying assumptions were: (1) that most conflict, erroneous assumptions, and confrontations between home and school develop through lack of understanding, inadequate communication and unclear explanations of parent and teacher roles and expectations; (2) that teachers will become more effective in teaching literacy skills to children, if they have adequate information about the children they teach and their families; and (3) that parents will be more effective in meeting their own expectations if they better understand the school's expectations.

II. THE SCHOOL

A. THE PHYSICAL PLANT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Shortridge Elementary School is located in a residential community in what is considered a low-income area. The official designation of low-income is determined by the number of students receiving free lunches at the school. Shortridge qualifies because 50% of the students in the school receive free lunches. The community was previously a predominantly Jewish community. However, in the last few years, the community has grown increasingly Black, and the student body of Shortridge is entirely Black. The students live within a radius of five or six blocks of the school.

Shortridge is a relatively modern school and has been under the guidance of the same principal for the past ten years. The school building and grounds cover about four short blocks in a square that includes parking space and a huge playground for its 1,000 students. The cuter walls of the school building are marked by graffiti. Across the street from the school is a sandwich shop where many of the school personnel buy their lunch.

Down the hall, from the principal's office is the teacher's lounge. There, during break and lunchtime, a visitor can learn how to bake a carrot cake; what the latest diet-regimen is; what parents and children are or are not giving teachers a hard time; and what the combat pay should be during these trying times. The teachers' lounge is a spacious room, and yet, because of all the tables and chairs scattered around, it appears crowded. There are two bulletin boards on the wall. One is filled with information about the teachers' union and materials describing careers and opportunities within the school system. The other board holds a school menu as well as pamphlets concerning conferences and trips that can be taken. There is a constant flow of teachers in and out of the lounge from 11:00 on, buying snacks or engaging in light conversation for a few minutes. People generally sit at the same table, with the same group. The cafeteria is located to the right of and down the hall from the teachers' lounge.

In the early morning hours parent volunteers and cafeteria staff drink coffee and talk about happenings in the community or about dieting. Parent volunteers and cafeteria staff are all from the community--paid staff as well as volunteer parent workers. The parent volunteers at one time had a physical fitness class, which was cancelled temporarily for lack of an organizer. The principal makes the school facilities available to the group on an ongoing basis.

On the cafeteria walls are pictures of various cartoon characters--Fat Albert, Minnie Mouse, Big Bird, Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and Cat in the Hat. No meals are cooked in the cafeteria. The food is furnished by a food service and is served by the cafeteria workers and the parent volunteers.

Various kinds of toys and trinkets are given to classes and individual students who exhibit good behavior and are not overly noisy while eating lunch. A balloon hanging over the table of a class indicates that the students have exhibited good behavior and are thereby entitled to a prize.

B. STAFF

The school staff, professional and non-professional, numbers 70 people to provide educational instruction to 1,067 children. There are thirty-two classroom teachers supported by a large number of specialists in all the disciplines. Racially, the staff is integrated according to the guidelines established by H.E.W. The staff of Shortridge school is stable, with all but four of the teachers having been at the school for five years or more. The number of parent volunteers in school activities may range from 10-15 on any day depending on variations in the amount of work and activiites in which they assist the teachers. The apparent ease of interaction between parents and the school principal indicates an atmosphere that is receptive to parent involvement. Furthermore, the principal has something of an "open door" policy that allows parents to go to his office with their problems without an appointment.

The principal is stockily built. He greets everyone who enters his school in a friendly way and tries to provide whatever assistance he can to projects affecting the school staff, parents, or outsiders. He prides himself in knowing what goes on in the school and appears to be in all places at once, popping into classrooms frequently to give brief lectures to the pupils. His teachers appear not to mind the interruptions, and most of the children seem to love the attention. Whenever he walks the halls, he is likely to be surrounded by children. He seems to be highly regarded by most of the parents and community; he is committed to the development of literacy in the school and to the fostering of a cordial partnership between home and school. He is a strict disciplinarian. He sees insistence on discipline as being an effective technique of teaching. He states that he views the area of discipline as a way of life, not merely a negative reaction to an experience. He further states, that the best form of discipline is that which springs from within, and that the goal of education in a free society is to develop citizens who are equipped with the inner controls which will enable them to operate freely with a true sense of responsibility and a wholesome respect for the rights of others.

C. THE COLLABORATING TEACHERS

1. Selection

The first few visits to the school in November, 1979, I spent with the principal, who described the inner workings of the school and provided an introduction to members of the teaching staff with whom I would be working.

Two fifth-grade and two sixth-grade teachers agreed to collaborate in the project (two black female teachers and two white teachers, one male and one female). All the teachers were participants in the Academics Plus Program (page 10-12, this report) which requires specific responses of the parents who are involved. The teachers who volunteered to assist with the project assumed that the research would be useful in their efforts to get parents more involved in their children's literacy development.

2. Teacher Profiles

Mrs. Q

Mrs. Q is a married, articulate, young black woman who teaches sixth grade. She believes that teachers should "look professional", because it increases credibility and helps students understand that one should dress according to the situation and that opinions of others are based on one's dress.

> I tell the children I dress a certain way when I come to school because I don't come to play; I come to work. When I come to work, I dress in that manner. That is why I don't wear pants to school, because I don't feel that they are appropriate.

Mrs. Q appears to be very organized and is prepared to begin teaching as soon as the students enter the room. She always stands while teaching. She seems to be in constant motion, moving up and down in front of the chalkboard to give the class the best view of the chalkboard as well as to command their attentions. In her own words, "I like to have human contact with the children, rather than them just being a student in my room." Even when Mrs. Q reprimands students, she explains why and appears to do as in a positive manner. She is a stickler for demanding that the class speak standard English. She was observed on numerous occasions correcting or mildly reprimanding the students for speaking "incorrectly". Speaking "incorrectly" to Mrs. Q means using double negatives or beginning a sentence by saying, "you know, like"; "like that"; "like, you know". She says, "I tell them that nothing is ever 'like'. I really think that, when children go out and grow up, first impressions are everything: and, if they don't learn how to speak with other people and to other people, they will never be able to make it in life". All members of her class are expected to produce their homework daily. If the students are negligent in performing their duties, they are required to remain after school to complete their work.

> I'm strict in the sense that if I ask them to do something in a certain way, I expect it to be done that way. I have high expectations of all of the children, no matter what level they are on. I expect them to do the best that they can on the level that they are on.

Her lessons are sprinkled with humor, and she relates her past school experiences to the class, which they seem to enjoy. She usually involves the class by asking questions of and soliciting answers from the children. Mrs. Q considers herself to be a traditional teacher.

> I am very traditional. I don't like open classrooms where every child gets to do his own thing, because each child does not know what his own thing is in sixth grade. I really believe that structure is everything in learning. Everything we do in life has a structure to it, and I believe that children at this age need this more than anything else.

Ms. Z

Ms. Z is a young, single teacher of Italian heritage who teaches sixth grade. She has a radiant smile that is infectious and permeates the whole class. She directs a constant stream of comments and questions towards the class: "Now children, what is the answer to this"? "Remember children, this was homework checked by your parents, signed by your parents". "I like the way you are doing your homework now." "That is nice, Tanya". As in Mrs. Q's room, the students are expected to produce their homework daily. If the homework is not produced, the children have to stay after class and complete the assignment. Ms. Z feels that she is firm but fair in dealing with the children.

Her lessons are geared typically for the middle of the class rather than the high or low members in the class. When introducing a new lesson, Ms. Z lectures to the students, demonstrates points through the use of the chalkboard, and sums up what has been said. To measure results she often uses essay-style tests.

> I feel that there is some value to testing. I don't like for children to feel that they learn for tests, but I feel that tests prepare them for life out there, because everything they do in life they will be asked to write.

Every child is expected to raise a hand when a question is asked. She will go from student to student trying to elicit the right answer and involve the whole class in the lectures and discussions. Ms. Z considers herself a traditional teacher with respect to organization and discipline. "I believe discipline is teaching right from wrong. I don't believe discipline is punishment". At the same time, she believes herself to be progressive because, as she says, she is always open to new ideas and feels that a teacher can never stop learning.

Mrs. M

Mrs. M is a middle-aged black teacher who has two children, a boy of nine and an adult son. She appears to be reserved and has a friendly smile. Mrs. M, in her view of herself, is a stern and demanding but fair teacher; she considers herself to be very traditional. Her definition of traditional means maintaining good discipline in the classroom, requiring homework on a daily basis, and insisting upon high moral standards (politeness, good manners). She does not like the concept of open classroom, and prefers to work with the class as a group rather than in a one-to-one or small-group setting. Her manner of teaching consists mainly of lectures with pupil responses. Mrs. M has the reputation of being one of the best teachers in the school among many other teachers, many parents, and the principal.

Mr. P

Mr. P, whose room is adjacent to that of Mrs. M, is a white, fifth grade teacher who uses the lecture method in most of his teaching. Mr. P manages to keep a smile on his face much of the time in class. He always stands while lecturing and uses the chalkboard for demonstrating points. Even as he lectures, he has the children responding to questions he asks. When class is not in session, he maintains a lot of high bantering and discussion between himself and his class. He has a great sense of humor and uses it to his advantage when trying to emphasize a major point or clarify a concept. Mr. P thinks of himself as being both traditional and progressive: traditional in that he believes that children must be taught the basics; progressive in that he believes his learning new methods and techniques can improve learning and literacy among the children.

3. Similarities and Contrasts

In considering the teachers as a group, there are basic similarities and some differences in teaching style and in the way they view their teaching techniques. Teachers in both grades are similar in that they describe their teaching style as traditional even though they define traditional differently. All agree that homework is an effective tool in literacy development. They expect parent involvement to some degree, although they differ slightly in what they think involvement should be. Mrs. Q and Ms. Z expect a lot of involvement by parents, while Mrs. M sees herself as accomplishing her goal with less involvement. Mr. P does not have a specific opinion on which would be better: a lot of involvement or not as much. Mrs. M and Ms. Z appear sterner in their demands on the children than Mr. P or Mrs. Q. "Sterner", as defined here, means that Mrs. M and Ms. Z were more likely to adhere strictly to what had been planned for that day's work without deviating from the schedule. That is not to say that the other classes did not adhere to what had been planned; however, there appeared to be a bit more flexibility in their schedules.

D. POLICY AND PROGRAM AT SHORTRIDGE

1. Policy on Literacy

The statement of school policy on literacy is more general than specific: that is, the school pledges itself to provide a wholesome learning environment wherein each student may attain the fullest educational, physical, social, and emotional development. Further, the school is committed to the task of providing a complete and well-rounded elementary school program. In the pursuit of this aim, the school expects to focus on the child to help guide the methods used in selecting the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the student.

"Through the close cooperation of parents as partners in our effort to help build self-confidence, self-reliance, self-sufficient students, we shall realize our goal". The policy statement by the principal is enclosed in a handbook sent home to the parents. The principal stated to me that the reason he constantly popped in and out of rooms was to see whether the mandate was being carried out by the teachers. He added that he tried also to keep close contact with parents to see that they met school expectations by doing their part.

2. The Academics Plus Program

a. Descriptive overview

The Academics Plus Program is a part of the "Back to Basics" movement that gained prominence in the seventies. It was implemented in Shortridge in 1978. During the first year the program was open only to students finishing the fifth grade. It is now open to fourth, fifth and sixth grade students.

The Academics Plus Program provides an opportunity for select students to enroll in special classes designed to provide firm grounding in the basics (language arts and mathematics) and in the development of good study skills, as well as to promote general intellectual and emotional growth. The major objective of the program is to ensure that students who participate will be able to enroll in a "good" junior high school and eventually go on to one of the "better" senior high schools. In keeping with the principles of the Back to Basics movement, the program provides a highly structured human environment with emphasis on study skills and work habits, a strict code of discipline, minimum requirement for dress and appearance, homework on a regular basis and commitment to the program's goals by the parents whose children are selected.

The parents file an application for their child or children to be selected for the program. The selection process itself is complex and rests heavily on the evaluating of teachers who have taught the students. As a result, the stated selection criteria are subject to wide interpretation.

In general the selction process is as follows: First, the teachers of the students make recommendations to the teachers of the next year's academics-plus classes. A student who may be doing poorly in class but exhibits positive attitudes and behavior may be chosen over an academically superior student who is a "troublemaker." The latter teachers then examine the academic records, standard test scores, attendance records, and any other information they have available on the recommended students. Although these teachers have the final say, the reading specialist and the principal also review the list of candidates and can recommend elimination of any candidates they feel should not be admitted into the program. The parents of a child who is accepted sign a contractual agreement that spells out their responsibility. If the parents do not fulfill their responsibilities, or if the child fails to meet expectations, he or she can be dropped from the program.

The students are selected from third grade for fourth grade academics plus, from fourth for fifth grade, from fifth grade for sixth grade. Children out of the fifth who are not chosen for the program are sent to other schools. At a meeting held at the beginning of the year, teacher and parent responsibilities are discussed. In summary they are as follows: The teachers are to assign heavy workloads that are carefully planned and organized and that are aimed at improving the student's math and reading level. The teacher is to make clear to both student and parents what he or she expects of them. The teacher explains to the child that he is to do his work, behave properly, attend school regularly and come to shcool appropriately dressed. The parent is to come to school at a specified time to meet with the teachers, make sure that the child assumes all of his/her responsibilities, and check and sign the nightly homework assignment. The official objectives of the program are to (1) build a sense of responsibility, (2) foster a sense of confidence, (3) generate pride in accomplishment, and (4) engender a positive self-image.

The role of the parent, as officially stated, is to do the following:

1. Support program rules
2. Supervise homework
3. See that children come to school,
    a. regularly
    b. punctually
    c. well prepared
    d. well rested
4. Keep channel of communication open with teachers
    a. send notes explaining absence
    b. contact teacher when questions arise
    c. be active, offer assistance, volunteer, accompany, suggest
5. Encourage good citizenship
    a. good manners
    b. respect
    c. self control

Prior to making classroom observations, I spent time becoming familiar with the school and interacting with the principal and the teacher-participants in order to develop comfortable and workable relationships. Teachers were encountered in private sessions in the lounge, at lunch and in private sessions whenever their schedules permitted.

Absence of enthusiastic parent involvement, even though it includes a minority of the parents, is of conern to teachers for several reasons. First of all, they feel that they have done their part. They have gone to great pains to explain to parents what is expected of them. They have spent considerable amounts of their own time and energy in planning lessons and in correcting homework. The least parents could do, they feel, is to show their appreciation by cooperating.

Secondly, program goals include the teaching of work habits and life values as well as respect for self and others. From the perspective of the teachers these efforts are in vain if they aren't meticuluously reinforced by apparent examples.

Finally, teachers see the success of the program as dependent upon a total unified effort. This effort is part of the sense of pride in being associated with Shortridge, and by extension, the sense of the importance

III. ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS

A. Getting Started

There were more observations in some of the four classrooms than others because I wanted to observe certain students closely. The data were gathered in the school through classroom observation, interviews with the principal, parent volunteers, home and school personnel, children, general conversations with other teachers, para-professionals and office staff, and observations of parent teas and "mock day" at school for parents.

The time I spent in classroom observations ranged from one to two hours, two and sometimes three days a week, depending on the activities at school in which parents were involved. After most class sessions, I shared information with the teachers about the observations in the classroom and solicited their perceptions and comments.

I began my classroom observations in Mrs. Q's room. I was introduced as Mr. Monroe from the University who would be spending time in the classroom and would be visiting the homes of specific children in the classroom. The children gave me a puzzled look and whispered among themselves while they observed me as I wrote. After a few sessions the children were curious to know why they had not been chosen for the project and how they could become involved in the project. They wanted to know whether I was going to take their friends on trips and why I was going to their friends' homes to visit. I told them I was going into homes to find out whether the children were doing their homework and to see whether their parents were helping them with it or checking it. I told them that I might take their friends on a couple of trips and if there was another project, they might be included. This seemed to satisfy their curosity. In observing, I noted any references to parents made by teachers.

B. Teachers Concerns

(1). Homework

I noticed that in all the classrooms observed, the daily ritual was begun with, "Take out your homework so that it can be checked." The student who didn't have his or her homework was reprimanded and was told to stay after school and complete it. The severity of the reprimand depended on how inconsistent the particular student had been in completing homework assignments.

Teacher comments included the following:

Mrs. M: Did your mother check your homework?

Student: Yes--She glanced at it.

Mrs. M: You should tell your mother that she should do more than glance at it.

Ms. Z: What is the first thing that you do when you get home? Look up your homework to see what you have to do. It is not your mother's, father's, or babysitter's job--it is your job.

---- Remember children this was your homework checked by by your parents, signed by your parents.

---- I like the way you are doing your homework now.

---- That is nice, Tayna.

Such comments as the above were made frequently. It became evident that the teachers placed great emphasis on homework; seeing that it was completed every night was a major responsibility of parents and students. The comments serve various purposes: to commend, to scold , and to constantly remind students that the responsibility for completing homework was theirs--further to assert that parents had a responsibility to do more than just "glance at the work." The reprimands in most cases were mild and were made with a certain amount of tact and humor. However, the more consistent offenders were scolded severely; and teachers threatened to send notes home or make telephone calls. Also, the repeated offended was constantly asked what role his parents were playing in seeing that the homework was completed.

In our discussions about homework and parents' roles, teachers made these comments:

Mrs. Q: I think we demand that the children have homework done and the parents at least look at it. Not necessarily read it, but look at it. Sometimes parents sign it and don't look at it, but at least we demand they do that....

Mrs. Z: We don't make homework cumbersome and pile it on, but it is a review of that day's lesson. If every day that parent would know what we covered in school,

> the parents, even if they don't have cognitive skills like their children, they could at least look at it and say, "What did my child do?" "What is he doing here?" and, "Is this math?" Maybe they could even ask the child to explain (his or her) homework. This way the child's getting a double review, and the parents are also showing that they're interested in what the child is doing. They would say, "Oh, this is what they must have done in spelling; this is what they must have done in math; this is what they must be covering in social studies." That parent would almost have a daily diary of what that child is doing. That's what homework is.

In Mrs. M's view:

> The children have an assignment book that they record just the homework assignment. So when the child gets home at night, I expect the parents to check that homework assignment book to make sure that the child has done all the assignments in that book. They don't have to check whether it is right or not, but just that it is done and is neatly done. I will do the correcting as far as grammar and math are concerned. So a parent's signature to me says I have checked my child's homework book. He has completed all of his assignments; it is neatly done and I am putting my signature to it.

Homework assignments are written on the board everyday and the students copy them in their assignment books.

Example: Math Homework, page 59
Rounding off to the nearest ten, #1-10
Spelling Definitions, 25 words

Homework, as described and defined by the teachers, has specific functions in the acquisition of literacy skills. Homework is to provide parents with a daily progress report and an on-going report of what the child is doing; it reinforces what the child is taught daily, and teaches the child to assume responsibilities and practice self-discipline. The teachers agreed that homework "checked" meant that parents had examined the homework-assignment book to see that the homework was done--that it was neatly done. "Checked" did not necessarily mean examining the work for errors; the teachers themselves would check for errors. As Mrs. M states:

> If parents haven't been in school recently, they may not know how to do the work. The purpose of homework is not to frustrate parents. If I get homework back from

> the parents signed and it is done wrong, I feel like somehow that child didn't understand what I taught, and it is my responsibility to go back and clear that up. However, if you get an assignment like "five and four is nine," and the child has "two": now those parents can pick up something like that.

The teachers agreed that they considered the examining of homework a major parental responsibility.

Teachers often told students about personal experiences with their own parents and about the importance of homework in their development. Mrs. Q in reviewing her childhood:

> All my kids had to laugh when I told them about how I was twelve years old: I said that I didn't want to hear anything from my mother and father. All I wanted to do was be with my friends and do what I wanted to do. But my mother wouldn't let me do that, you see. My mother said, "You get in that house and sit on that porch to read. Where are your books? Let me see your homework. When are you going to do this? These are your chores for the week." And they all had to laugh. "Yeah, that sounds like my mother--this and that and this and that." I said, "Yeah, but the difference is that some people's parents will make them do it and some won't." All my mother had to do was say it one time and I knew she meant it. When she said, "Go upstairs and start your homework," that meant no radio and no television. That meant at your desk and you work for two hours whether your're finished or not. You stay in the room and find something to do. Two hours everyday and those two hours were devoted to school work and reading only.

Ms. Z: We didn't become teachers by fooling around and giving trouble in school and playing hookey and carrying on. Why are we where we are? Because somebody back home pushed and pushed and talked and talked and talked, pounded and pounded and didn't even spare the rod at times.

Mrs. M: It seems that parents are beginning to be more like my parents were when I was in school...you come home, change your clothes, and get on that homework. I think (that in) coming back to basics, as we call it, we're bringing the parents back to the old ways. For a while it seemed as if parents were saying, "I am sending them to this school; you educate them; it is all on you."

There is a feeling by the teachers that parents are much too lenient with their children, as compared to parents of the past. One senses a longing by the teachers for the "good old days," as they discuss their early school days when it seemed that parents were committed to school and more demanding of their children. The teachers feel that too often parents side with the children whenever a conflict arises between teacher and child. Mrs. M states that parent involvement was different in the "old days":

> It wasn't the type of parent involvement that we expect today, but the student knew that if you were kept after school, if you were punished, you got it again when you got home. That was the kind of reinforcement you got at home. I am not saying that this is exactly fair because the child in my time didn't have a say. If the teacher said you did it--you did it. But then I don't remember having discipline problems at that time either. There was no such thing as talking back to the teachers. So much more teaching went on because they did not have the discipline problems.

The teachers all in some manner express that parents are confronted with more difficult problems today: drugs, more one-parent families, two working parents leaving the child on his own, and too much television.

(2). Television.

Mrs. M feels that there is not time for the child to read because all of his time is devoted to television:

> Most children watch television from the time they go home until it is time to go to bed. I found that some of the stories they watch come on at eleven o'clock at night. I say, "How do you know what that program was about?" He says, "I watched it." I say, "That comes on at 11:00 at night." They seem to watch without any kind of parental supervision either. They watch anything and everything they want to watch. There is not too much on Channel Twelve (educational television) they watch. Most of the children have televisions in their rooms. So that really promotes more watching. From what I hear the children say they watch, I don't think there are too many of the parents saying "That's right (or wrong) for you to watch." They just watch whatever (they want) or maybe it's the whole family watching and they are just there.

Ms. Z views the situation similarily:

> I know my children can't wait to leave this room in the

> afternoon to go home and watch those soap operas. I say they are not anxious to get home to go to the library (but) to start watching those soap operas. They are. And the next day they discuss them....As Q said, we had required reading time in our home (and) I wasn't allowed out at night. And I know these children must have that T.V. from the minute they go home.

The teachers feel that television is detrimental to children's reading development because they watch it too much, because they are not selective in their programs, and because of the lack of parents' supervision. The teachers admit that they base their assumptions and generalizations on what the children tell them about their viewing habits and the variety of programs that they watch. Teachers feel that they can see the difference in the homework of the children who talk about television a lot as compared to those children who state that they are allowed to watch only certain programs during weekdays.

(3). Reading.

Teachers felt that parents should require children to read at home.

Mrs. Q: I think a large part (of parents' responsibility is) requiring children to read. They just don't get enough reading at home. It is all television or nothing. I rarely hear children discussing books; you hear them always discussing television. I mean it was almost a religion in my house that we read. Television had to be turned off at a certain point in our house. We read. Maybe it was because I was always a book person. I always did read books. I was always interested in books, so it's not hard for me; but I do realize in today's world the television is the babysitter for some people. They put (the children) in front of the television: "Watch television and don't bother me." Why don't they say, "Read a book and don't bother me."

The school's curriculum mandates fifteen minutes sustained silent reading in all classes on a daily basis. Each classroom has a forty-five minute reading period built into its schedule. A reading center and tutoring sessions provide individualization of instruciton and remediation for those students who are experiencing reading difficulties. The participant teachers have a variety of books and reading materials in their rooms for the children, and the children are allowed to go to the library once a week to check out a book for reading at home. Teachers feel that parents should be responsible for seeing that the child incorporates a reading period in his or her schedule at home so that the child develops a love for reading as well as reinforces reading skills. I rarely observed free reading periods in the classrooms beyond the sustained silent reading period and the visit to the library.

(4). Cleanliness, Respect and Attitudes.

Another teacher expectation was that parents send children to school clean. Ms. Z:

> We demand that parents send (children) to school clean, well dressed. I am not saying the height of fashion, but having their clothes look presentable so the other children don't talk. Now I never found any excuse, not even in the poorest of poor families, for any child to come to school dirty. You know they could at least have old clothing be clean.

Appropriate dress is one of the requirements of the Academis Plus Program. Teachers feel that coming to school clean has more impact on the socialization process and peer interaction than effect on learning. Mrs. Q:

> We talked a little bit about the way you get up in the morning and (the way you) feel....If If you don't feel well you want to make people (believe) that you are feeling well so you dress that way and you act that way.

In the teacher's view, a student's coming to school clean indicates respect for self, presents a positive image, and prevents criticism by peers. Most of the children that I observed were neatly dressed and well-groomed. The issue was one, however, that teachers didn't dwell on at length because of lack of knowledge about the home and the child's circumstances.

Cleanliness, itself, they felt, was related to "respect" and "attitudes." If a child had been taught respect and had a good attitude about the school's program, he would come to school dressed appropriately.

Teachers had the following to say about respect and attitudes and parents' responsibilities:

> Ms. Z: I think parents should send the children with respect, because you know if the parents have a bad attitude toward the teacher, it carries right on over in the classroom. I have noticed when the parents change toward me, (and it was probably because) there was less being said about me.
>
> Mrs. M: I like good moral standards, good manners. I like for children to be polite to me and to each other. If we are to develop literacy skills in these children, they must show us the proper respect. I can't teach

a "sassy" child, and I will not stand for a child talking back to me.

Mrs. Q: You know respect is everything....One little girl's mother came to speak to me. The mother had an "attitude". By the time I finished speaking to her and going through every little detail, her whole attitude had changed. "I didn't know that this was going on in school." I said, "Well, why don't you investigate before you get an attitude about school. Keep your mind and your eyes open to any suggestions or anything that you don't know about that is going on in school. I couldn't figure out why Donna was doing this, why she was failing, and now she was telling me one thing and you're telling me another." And I said, "Well, you know like everything is, there are two sides to every story."

For teachers, what counts as having good attitudes and showing proper respect is sending the children to school with a positive attitude about school and, if the child comes home with a complaint, getting in touch with the teacher for an explanation rather than taking the child's side. Otherwise, conflict arises between parents and teachers that could be avoided.

The following is an example of poor attitude, as exhibited by one student, according to the teacher:

Ms. Z: Come to the board, B, so that I can show you the correct way to write the letter 'n'.

B walks to the chalkboard in a swaggering manner. After Ms. Z demonstrates the proper technique of writing the letter 'n', B is given the opportunity to try his hand at doing it correctly. He writes the letter two or three times almost as perfectly as Ms. Z; then he reverts back to writing the letter in his way prior to the demonstration, as if openly to defy Ms. Z. Ms. Z is infuriated by B's defiant attitude. She then lectures the class about what constitutes poor attitudes. She points to a student whom she taught in the second grade and has him tell how negative attitudes once hampered his progress. The student with coaxing, explains that he had had a problem with his behavior and attitude. He says that once he decided to change, he had done much better in his work.

Teachers further expressed that poor attitudes and disrespect eventually resulted in discipline problems that took away valuable teaching time and created conflict between teacher and student; they also feared that students would not be able to judge the merits of a matter without becoming emotional.

> Mrs. Q: I haven't had a problem so much with respect but the attitude, the way they relate to teachers; and this is really strange. Yesterday, I asked the children to evaluate their teachers on a scale of one to ten, and I told them not to let their emotions get in the way of their scores because emotions play a great deal. Half of the children let their emotions get in the way, and I didn't say anything until they had finished. I said, "Truthfully, tell me the truth, how many let their emotions get in the way of the teacher's scores?" and half the class raised their hands. They weren't able to, imagine what their parents are not able to be as far as teachers are concerned.

What Mrs. Z was trying to point out was that if children can't control their emotions and attitudes in evaluating teachers, then parents may be even less objective in their judgments. Ms. Z tries to add further clarification to what Mrs. Q was saying:

> It is hard to get a child to recognize and appreciate good teachers when they are at the age we're dealing with. All they know is how they are treated. In other words, if they're picked on, and their work is corrected and things aren't just hunky dory, they dislike the teacher. Now if I correct them, they leave with a hurt feeling and now they don't like you, but I really don't care if the children like me if they want to learn.

Mrs. M feels that some parents' responses may perpetuate the way their children react to the teacher:

> I sent a test paper home where the child questioned two marks that I had put on the paper; and when the parent signed the test paper, she put a big red circle around the two things that the child had questioned and, I didn't even choose to answer. I filed it where I keep my test papers because I thought, "I am not going to let her start challenging me." The child...is going to take (her notes) home and try to get mother on her side. Now that is not going to work. This is a parent that I have been warned will come in here very irate if you don't do what she thinks. The lady didn't come in but I really have it planned in my mind that we are going to have a good understanding. I am the teacher in the classroom, and I don't think that I am

> infalliable. I can make a mistake, but there is a way to approach adult teachers, and I am not going to have a child approach me in that manner.

The teachers feel that trying to be a "good", no-nonsense teacher causes some children to display hostile attitudes toward them and that the children at their age are not mature enough to recognize the importance of having a teacher make demands that are necessary for learning. As a result, teachers reason, the main responsibility lies with the parents in helping the children see the necessity of showing proper respect to the teacher and coming to school with positive attitudes.

An incident seemed to lend credence to what the teachers stated. A student in Ms. Z's room was kept after school for not doing her homework and having it signed. She literally refused to do her homework. Attempts to resolve the issue through discussion with the parents proved fruitless. Ms. Z was verbally and almost physically attacked by the parents. This was not the only time there had been conflict between those particular parents and teachers. It was felt that the incident could have been avoided had the parents attempted to be positive about school and work out their problems with the teacher.

According to the participant teachers, only a minority of parents don't try to teach children positiveness about school. For instance, Mabel (participant) had a conflict with Ms. Z and was wrong in her interpretation of an issue. However, by the time the story reached Mabel's mother, through Mabel, it was all the teacher's fault. Mabel's mother went immediately to the school for clarification. After the situation had been rectified between the two, Mabel was made to apologize and was threatened with a whipping and further punishment if she didn't show the proper respect toward the teacher.

The teachers believed that peer pressure and peer example--the way other children talked to adults--contributed to the expression of negative attitudes at school. Ms. Z thought that this was Mabel's problem. Because Mabel was a class leader and did well in class, the children had a tendency to egg her on; however, Mabel's home life did not support her misbehavior. Her mother in my presence had threatened to "hang her by her toenails."

The way to encourage good "attitudes" was for parents to explain that the teacher has a responsibility and that the child has a responsibility also: to go to school and do his/her best work and behave. The teachers also asserted that they and parents had to work closer together in order to resolve school-related issues.

C. Communicating Expectations

(1) Issues

With respect to working together, teachers stated that they used many approaches to make school expectations known: Parent visitations to the school, telephone calls, report cards, a school day for parents and Home and School Meetings. A calendar of events is sent to parents each month.

> Ms. Z: We send a lot of signals before we finally like hit the nail on the head. It's usually when you finally say to the parents, "I must see you. Come in here." Then they are all upset. But before, there're report cards, there are meetings, especially with the Academics Plus. We had one-to-one relationships starting on day one without classes. The rest of the school had classes. We met with every single parent face to face. There were parents that could not make it--they worked. Okay, then we scheduled another meeting to explain how we were going to cycle. Still again, there were parents that couldn't make it; some of them did. Then we had back-to-school day where we actually had parents come in and cycle through the school as if they were their own child: sat and had reading with the reading teacher, etc. We tried to show the parents exactly. Of course, we had smaller intervals, but we made the parents sit and go through the whole feeling of the day, the school day, and then there were still parents that did not come. We send test marks home--some of them are just quizzes--every week; and the parents sign across the top, and then when they see the report cards some of them "hoot" and "howl." "Oh, a failure...you know my daughter, my son, can read; my son can spell." But yet they sign those fifties. They sign those sixties, and only when you finally send for them or you tell them they are not passing--they come up hooting and howling and carrying on and can't understand why. Then you show them all this work and they're almost embarrassed--all this work with their signature on it. So you see, we do a lot of preparation; only some of them are blinded or they don't react until reaction is too late.

> Mrs. Q: I don't know, maybe it's me. I want to see from some parents maybe even just a note. Just a note telling me, "I was not pleased with this, they will do better, what can I do to help my child, I'd be more than happy to do that," but don't just send it back. And you say to the children, "What did your mother say?" That's my usual statement. "They said nothing about this." "Oh, she told me she didn't like it; she told me to do better." But that's not enough for me. I want them to be upset, not so much with their children but with themselves too.

As reported previously, the teachers made it very clear that their frustrations are not with all of the parents nor even most of the families participating in this project. They are basically referring to the small minority that regardless as to how well expectations are made known the results are rarely that those parents meet expectations. The teachers felt that any little sign toward them from the parents would make them feel that they and the parents had the same expectations for the children. Signs could come in the form of telephone calls when the fifties and sixties were brought home, followed by parental demands that the child get his act together. The teachers complained that, when all signals had been sent out and the parents had not responded, they were still blamed for the failure of the student. They were blamed even though the parents had been receiving progress report on their children.

> Mrs. Q: There were no two ways about it. You went to school, you did what the teacher said, and her word was god. It was like God's word and you had nothing else to say about it. When it was report card time and, I had better have a good report card or else. So that was it. But these days there are so many variables in a neighborhood such as this, where there are so many problems with the children's home life. Not saying all of them, but there are a lot of children in school that don't realize that they live out in the street. This carries over to their school life and the parents don't realize that their children need their support in school.

According to these comments there is a feeling that limited contact with the teacher in the past was permissable and even desired because parents demanded more from their children and had greater respect for the teacher's authority. It is felt by teachers, however, that today's parents may not be aware of the changes and expectations of the school. Heretofore, teachers and parents were not confronted with the problems that they are faced with today. Today teachers, are assigned more administrative tasks, have to do more disciplining, must be up with ever changing teaching techniques, which leaves less time for parent conferences. Furthermore, increasing numbers of teachers are living out of the neighborhood.

Problems for parents, as stated by teachers, include "poor home life" (defined as broken homes or absence of one parent),lack of reading materials in the home, too much television, increased pressures for children to succeed, lack of parental supervision because work schedules and, in general parents who show little concern about their children's literacy development. Further, they feel that communities are not as closely knit as in years gone by where every child in the neighborhood was a concern of all parents.

Following are descriptions of two examples of typical methods used to communicate school expectations to parents. They are: a parent tea and a mock school day to which parents were invited. They serve to illustrate the issues of communication raised here.

(2) A Parent Tea

A parents' tea was held in the school to explain the Academics Plus program to the parents and the expectations the teachers had of the parents. The meeting was held at two o'clock in the library. Cookies and punch were available as refreshment at the conclusion of the meeting. Twenty-two parents out of sixty-six showed up for the tea. There were two fathers in attendance, and out of the twenty mothers, four were parent volunteers.

Ms. Z welcomed the parents and thanked them for coming. She stated that their presence verified their commitment to the project and that the absence of so many parents showed lack of support for their children and the program. Then Ms. Z introduced the principal whose comments included the following: "Last year, out of 66 sixth graders that were in the program, over 50 of them were able to get into some special seventh grade program somewhere. We felt good about this. Your role in this is very important because we cannot operate without both having the same values.

What we are trying to do in school must be seen as having merit by you." The parents were attentive as the principal explained that they were to check and sign homework, see that children came to school dressed properly (if they went to the bank and saw the bank president without a tie, they might feel his position was less important than if he were properly dressed), and develop in the children a positive attitude about the school.

He told them about a note he had received from a parent who, rather than being supportive of the teacher because she reprimanded the child for not bringing work completed, was threatening to come up to the school to do physical harm to the teacher. He talked about teaching the children self discipline. He then stated that he had to leave because every Thursday he took charge of the fifth and sixth grade children at 2:00 to teach them critical thinking. He again thanked the parents for coming and left the room. The parents clapped lightly as he left the room. Ms. Z stood up and, in a very formal manner, explained how children were graded and evaluated. Then Mrs. Q explained what standardized test scores were and how the scores were used in the selection process. After the presentation, very few questions were asked. The meeting lasted 45 minutes. Some of the parents stayed to talk to the teachers, and others left.

I was able to talk to two parents about their perceptions of the meeting and whether they understood what was expected of them. One parent, who is a volunteer in the school, said that she felt she understood most of what was expected of her, but that she would have to go back and ask whether they wanted parents to help children with homework or simply check it. She said it was not a problem for her because she was at the school everyday, and she could ask the teachers what she wanted to know. I asked her if she felt others in the group understood. "I can't speak for the whole group, but I am sure that some had questions that they may have wanted to ask but didn't." The other parent I talked to stated that she had always checked her son's homework and helped him with it when he needed it and that it really didn't make any difference what the teachers said because she felt that educating her child was her concern and that the responsibility could no longer be left up to the school. Each class in the Academics Plus

Program had a yearly tea to explain the program.

Another method for making expectations known was through the "mock school day." This day is held simultaneously in all four rooms (M,Q,P,L).

(3) A Mock School Day

Four parents are in attendance on a fair and sunny morning. Mrs. Q talks informally to the parents, her conversation sprinkled with laughter as she describes her interactions with the children. She speaks of certain weaknesses that she had as a child in school that made her a stickler for demanding that children speak correctly and understand the rudiments of English. "When I went to college, I was among the top students in my class, but I found out I knew so little." Parents appear to be very enthusiastic about what is going on and ask a lot of questions and tell about their own experiences when they were in school.

Mrs. Q passes out the homework books so the parents can see the process that is followed every day. One parent: "My child comes home and tries to imitate you by marking and checking with a red pen." Mrs. Q: "I fuss, I fight, I push: and now it is having effect. I am very happy with my reading group." Parent: "My son came here when he was in the fourth and now he is in the ninth, and he is so glad that parents and teachers worked with him." Parent: "Do you encourage competition?" Mrs. Q: "Not for grades." Parent: "My daughter is getting more and more that way." Parent: "My daughter came home and I said, 'Where is your homework.' I checked it and said, 'This couldn't be it.' She said, 'This is the way it was on the board.' I said, 'No, no.'" There is laughter among the group; Mrs. Q explains that she tells the children to check to make sure that the homework is copied correctly. Parent: "How are we going to keep up with them? It has been so long since we were in school? What can we do to help our children's language?" Mrs. Q explains that parents should be conscious of the way they talk and use words in the home and that they should not use slang because children imitate parents and peers. When it is time to change classes with Ms. Z, a parent says, "I enjoyed myself today."

Mrs. M has fourteen parents in her room: 11 women and 3 men. Mrs. M has completed the homework books and is entertaining questions from the audience. Parent: "Sometimes I don't know how to help." Mrs. M explains that they shouldn't help but should "check" the homework; she says it is not necessary to know what the child doing. Parent: "My daughter asked me what would happen if she didn't do her homework. I said, 'I would beat your tail, and I would tell Mrs. M to beat your tail and tell her to keep you after class.' Sometimes I have a hard time trying to figure out which way to go." After the questions, Mrs. M makes an assignment to the parents that they are to complete and have checked by their children and sent back to school the next day. Meanwhile, Mr. P across the room from Mrs. M has the parents seated in a circle as he explains the importance of checking the homework because, given the number of papers he has to grade, it will be very helpful to him.

Mrs. M explains why she thinks it may be difficult for the parents to understand the school's demands:

> I just think that the parents think that the child just comes to school. They learned that there should be no contact with the teacher until report card time. I think that it goes back to that old tradition. "Don't bother the teacher;" you know how it was when we came along. Parents had nothing to say about the children's education because first of all we went to school knowing that we had to learn.

There were other concerns and assumptions about parents' roles expressed by teachers. One concern was that parents did not talk with and spend enough time with their children.

> Teacher: There is another thing I can't get used to. The children run into the house and sit down by themselves with nobody to talk to or even to share their day with. They eat dinner at different times; everybody eats different things. They might go to the store and get a cheese steak--to me that's not family. To me it should be, down at the table sharing what your day has been like. If you had a bad day, you want somebody to know you had a bad day and help you get over that. You want somebody to share those problems with; think that has a lot to do with the way children come to school. They're already mad when they come to school in the morning because they had nothing to share the night before. The parents are

> already out to work. Who's going to wave them goodbye. That's the reason my mother worked at night. She refused to work in the day. She worked at night when we were in the bed asleep. She was home when we got up in the morning to go to school; our breakfast was on the table. We got pushed out the door with a little kiss and a little wave--"I see you at lunchtime"--because we used to come home for lunch.

Another concern was that of the parents allowing children to stay up late.

> Ms. Z: If it was summertime, my mother would let us go out until maybe around 8 or 8:30 and come in and go to bed. If we weren't sleepy we'd stay in bed, regardless of whether we were sleepy or not because that was her time to be by herself. The children now are up all night. There have been shows on that have come on or gone off at 11:30 and these children have watched them. What kind of sleep is that, first of all? Children need eight hours. They they come struggling in here--sometimes no breakfast--and you expect them to really learn. How can you? They are out to lunch. They are still asleep. Now why don't they have a certain bedtime? I still don't understand that. Isn't there anyone in the home who says, "Sorry, up to bed. You're ten years old." I say, "What time does your mother let you go to bed? Oh, she puts it up to me. If I get tired, then I go to bed." Most kids have bedtime like 9 or 9:30, which is a good time. But 11:30 or 12:00--whenever they get ready for it? I mean, how is that any time for a child to go to bed? I just can't see it.

The teachers base their assumptions and information on what parents tell them as well as on what children say and how they react in class. If a child consistently came to school complaining about being hungry and couldn't wait until lunchtime, or ate candy bars and potatoe chips in the morning, teachers considered it a sure sign that the child wasn't eating breakfast.

Teacher aides, parent volunteers, members of home and school committees also provide information for teacher generalizations. However, even with these sources of information, teachers admit that they really don't know what goes on in the home.

D. What Counts as Involvement

What counts as parent involvement in meeting school expectations according to teachers means, (1) parents checking their children's homework to see that it is correctly and neatly done, (2) parents supervising and controlling the amount of television being watched in the home by the children, (3) parents seeing that the children spend some time reading at home, (4) parents sending their children to school well-dressed, well-fed, and well-rested, (5) parents attending school functions and parent-teacher conferences at school that relate to their children's literacy development and (6) parents sending the children to school well-disciplined and showing proper respect for the teacher.

In the opinion of teachers, parents who meet these criteria in fulfilling school expectations are considered involved parents. Parents who do not meet these criteria and are inconsistent in fulfilling these school expectations may be perceived by the teacher as not involved or not caring.

The following chapter details teacher concerns with these issues - how they perceive, feel and talk about the role parents play in the school's attempt to provide an exemplary educational experience for children.

IV. ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION OF FAMILIES

A. COMMUNITY

The following page contains a brief sketch of the community and its character. More comprehensive description of the community is provided by Anderson (IV. B). It is evident that most residents take pride in their homes and neighborhood. Many homes sport new coats of paint and in summer and spring, one may observe many flower gardens and well manicured shrubbery. There are few boarded up or burned out properties in the neighborhood. This is not to say, however, that they don't exist in the outer environs that surround this residential area. Vandals have torn down street signs on the corners, making it difficult for the outsider to find his way through the streets. There are corner stores scattered throughout the neighborhood but not enough to detract from the residential character.

The residents of the neighborhood range from young couples to retired couples. During the spring and summer, the area is much alive with groups standing on the corners, kids playing football and stickball in the street, and young girls doing dances choreographed to the rhythm of Mississippi and other rhymes. There are no playgrounds in the immediate neighborhood that are accessible to residents. Parents are reluctant to allow their children to go to the playground outside the perimeter of the neighborhood because of the danger of gang fights.

B. Selection of Families

Nine students and their families participated in the study, with two families being intensively observed. The principal and teachers of the fifth and sixth classes were consulted in the selection process. In making the choices attention was given to the students' performance in class (grades, behavior and attitude), teachers' notions about the extent of parent involvement in helping children meet school expectations and teacher judgements as to the parents' willingness to participate in the project.

We had hoped originally to have ten families, five where the parents were much involved in helping their children and five who teachers believed were little involved. One of the latter types moved out of the district before the home observations started. Of the remaining nine families, seven have both parents living at home and the two single parents have both just recently separated from their husbands. For no specific reason, there were three girls and six boys chosen for the project, only one had no siblings.

The teachers were satisfied that the five sets of parents were representative of those who were much involved in helping their children meet school expectations and four typical of those less involved. From the teachers' perspective, being involved, as described in the preceding chapter, means consistantly checking homework for correctness and neatness, attending parent teacher conferences, responding promptly to teacher telephone calls or notes, being supportive of the teacher and sending well-disciplined, respectful children to school.

Data were gathered in the home through weekly observational visits, with visits lasting from one half hour to two and one-half hours, depending on parents work hours, and their involvement in community activities (scouts, church, etc.). Visits in homes became longer as relationships with parents developed. After all families had been observed intensively for six months, the focus shifted to intensive weekly observations on two families. Other families in the study were being observed on a rotating basis. Informal interviews, formal taped interviews, and various trips with the children were other methods used in gathering data in the home and community.

C. Initial Meeting with Parents

The parents were introduced to the research project through a meeting held at Shortridge School. Seven mothers of the nine families attended the meeting and two mothers telephoned to express support for the project, giving reasons for not being in attendance. The parents introduced themselves and appeared enthusiastic about being chosen as participants for the project. The age range of the mothers was between 28 and 55 years.

I began the discussion by thanking them for coming and the reason for the project. I explained how little educators and researchers knew about what takes place in the home of families and of the major role that parents play in fostering literacy development in the home. I expressed the need to visit in their homes, interact with their families, and observe the activities that went on in their homes. I discussed my background as a reading teacher and the primary importance of the research; how the results would aid me and others to become better teachers, and provide insight on how to develop a better relationship between home and school.

All of the parents indicated that they were interested in any project that would aid in their chidren's literacy development. Many parent concerns surfaced at this initial meeting. These included: (1) not enough time to spend with children because of heavy work schedules (overtime, part time jobs), (2) how to combat excessive television watching, (3) children who won't discuss much of what went on at school, (4) how to best help children meet school expectations, and (5) most importantly, how to get children interested in reading and how to involve children who have been turned off to reading. Some typical comments made by parents were:

Mrs. Baker: Like I told you before about Lisa. She use to read but like I told you the other day, she can't stand it now. Now how will I get her interested in reading? She enjoyed reading until about the third grade. Then she just shied away from it. Now she can't stand it. My son would rather read comic books, at least he calls himself reading. Then he reads the book I got for him, Curious George. I am sick of that monkey but he loves that book. I have to cut my stories (soap operas) off to listen to him read that book. The parents get sick of it. I am sick of Curious George.

Mrs. Bronson: That story about Curious George reminds me of how I wanted my parents to read to me, The Sky is Falling.

Mrs. Mabe: First of all, I have two children and I have a baby girl. I think it is very important in getting young children interested in reading.

The principal visited the meeting and expressed his thanks to the parents for coming and for participating in the project. He responded to some of the parents concerns and discussed how the school was trying to resolve them. Because the principal projected such a positive attitude about the project in the meeting, it appeared to increase the receptiveness of the parents to the project. After obtaining addresses and telephone numbers, the discussion came to a close.

D. Parent Sketches

The following portraits presents a brief description of each of the families involved in the study. The first five families (1-5) listed are supposedly, much involved. The other four families (6-9) are listed as supposedly, mildly involved.

The five families listed as much involved according to the criteria listed on page (c-10) by the teachers were:

1. Baker Family
2. Crumshank Family
3. Mabe Family
4. Cokley Family
5. Prince Family

The four families listed as mildly involved according to the teachers were:

6. Jiles Family
7. Covington Family
8. Dockery Family
9. Bronson Family

The two families chosen for case studies were, the Baker Family (much involved) and Jiles Family (mildly involved). Criteria used in selecting these two families for case studies and intensive observations was based on a family availability, willingness to allow unlimited visitations in the homes, and receptiveness to intense observations.

The Baker and Jiles families will be referred to by name and case study in parenthesis when comments of theirs are quoted.

To clarify and avoid confusion for the reader, numbers will be used when necessary to identify comments made by other families (e.g., Families 2, 3, 4, Families 5, 7, 8, 9).

(1) Involved Parents

Family 1 (much involved). Mr. and Mrs. Baker are the parents of two children, one boy age six and one girl age 12, both attend Shortridge. Mr. Baker is a robust man in his middle thirties. He works for a food processing company. Mr. Baker is a fanatic about vintage western movies and collects them as well as old comic books. HIs comic book collection is extensive and, in his judgement, valuable. He is a good carpenter and has done a professional-looking job of remodeling their home. He expresses a strong concern about the children's education. On my first visit he took me on a tour of his basement to show me how he had converted it into a family room and entertainment center for the children. There were a variety of games, home movies, comic books, and numerous children's books. He stated that he had so few things as a child that he was sure he was spoiling his children.

Mrs. Baker is a friendly, perpetually smiling woman who is the center of attention among the parent volunteers at Shortridge of which she is one. She makes uniforms for the cheerleaders, she tutors, she organizes fund raising drives, she works in the cafeteria when necessary, and she was organizer for the parent volunteer physical fitness program. Mrs. Baker is a force to be reckoned with around the school. She is knowledgeable about the school and community. Mrs. Baker explains that she tries to be selective when buying toys for the children so that they can be utilized as learning tools. The Bakers have an extensive record collection and an aquarium filled with a variety of tropical fish. Mrs. Baker states that her daughter rarely needs her help in doing her homework; however, she has to spend a great deal of time with their young son. She speculates that even if her daughter needed help with homework she might not be able to provide it because she wouldn't understand it. Mrs. Baker sees it as her responsibility to work with the children at home because her husband works long hours (overtime). He is gone before the kids arise in the morning and it is almost bedtime for them when he arrives home at night. However, any discipline problems that Mrs. Baker might have with the children, Mr. Baker takes care of it on the weekend. Mrs. Baker is very firm and demanding of the children but appears to have a good relationship with them. They play games and watch television together according to the mother, and her daughter is able to talk to her about almost anything (so long as it doesn't interfere with her watching her soap operas). Normally she watches soap operas for two hours in the afternoon, then it is time to check homework and cook supper.

Lisa, who is a participant in this project is 10 years old, very quiet and kind of shy. She is a good student and never has trouble getting her homework done. She is a cheerleader at the school and belongs to a dance group outside the school. She never volunteers answers in classroom discussions, however, she always seems to have the right answer when called upon.

Family 2 (much involved). Ms. Crumshank, an employee of the telephone company, is a very articulate attractive lady in her mid-twenties who is separated from her husband. She and her son live with her sister and brother-in-law. The family's house is tastefully decorated and fully carpeted. In the family room downstairs, there are numerous library books, copies of Sports Illustrated, Ebony, and old copies of the Daily News. Ms. Crumshank has a very high opinion of Shortridge school and feels that it is a great improvement over the previous school that her son attended. She feels very strongly that parents and school must develop a strong cooperative relationship. Ms. Crumshank and her son participate in a lot of activities together. Studying the Bible, taking trips, watching television are among some of their activities.

In her words, Ms. Crumshank, was an achiever when she was in school and because of it is very demanding of her son. She tutors children in a program that is sponsored by the telephone company. She demands that Teddy read to her every night so that she can ask him questions to see how well he understands. Even though he reads every night, he does not like to read.

Teddy, the participant, is very quiet, slender little boy, an average student, and he works very hard to keep up. He rarely misses having his homework finished. Teddy loves to write letters to relatives and friends and play basketball. One of his jobs, one he seems to enjoy, is to fill out the grocery list and go shop with his mother.

Family 3 (much involved). Mrs. Mabe, a large, attractive woman, is the mother of three children. Two daughters, 11 and 6, and a son 14. Although Mrs. Mabe is separated from her husband, he still visits his family and maintains a friendly relationhip to Mrs. Mabe. Both are optimistic about reconciliation. She is strongly committed to education and feels that this contributed to the break up of her marriage. She felt that her aspirations were higher than her husband's and this created conflict between them.

She maintains that her aspirations are still very high for herself and her children. She has tried, she insists, to instill in her children the belief that they can accomplish any feat they set out to, if they work hard. As a result, she is very stern about homework being completed.

Mrs. Mabe is a practical nurse and is doing further study at a local college to further expand her knowledge. She appears to be a very religious person. Her conversation on most visits were constantly sprinkled with references to God and how he was the guiding force in her life. The whole family attends Sunday School and church on a regular basis. She demands that the children be polite to each other and several times reprimanded them for not saying excuse me when they interrupted our conversation.

Mrs. Mabe has consciously tried to create a learning environment in the home. For example, she keeps a small tankful of tropical fish with a book next to it that gives a brief explanation about each fish. There is a piano that everyone can play (not very well), a variety of books checked out from the library by the children, a worn set of Worldbook encyclopedias, and an assortment of Black magazines (Ebony, Ebony Jr., Black Stars). The Bible had its own niche on the mantle over the fireplace. There are a few beautiful green plants scattered around the living room. She is proud of her son's interest in the plants. He was observed watering the plants and spraying them for bugs.

Mabel, her eleven-year-old daughter is a very good student in school. She does have a tendency to challenge the teacher from time to time--which has caused conflict between herself and the teacher. On at least one occasion, Mrs. Mabe has had to go to the school and work out a problem. Despite this she is very quiet and her challenges often take the form of pouts and sulks. This is a common response when she is reprimanded by the teacher at school or by her mother at home.

Mabel is very devoted to her father even though he no longer lives in the home. The teacher mentioned that she refuses to bring back her report card until her father has seen it. She likes to write poetry, however, her favorite pastime is reading. In my presence, Mable was always very well mannered, a reflection of her mother's demands for obedience from all her children.

Family 4 (much involved). Mr. and Mrs. Cokley are a quiet and reserved couple in their early fifties. They are the parents of one son 10. Mrs. Cokley is a poised, slender lady, employed fulltime, and very active in her church. Mr. Cokley is a retired government worker in his late fifties and seems to spend most of his time around home. Most of the conversations were generated by Mrs. Cokley and myself, with Mr. Cokley nodding his head in agreement when responding. The house is tastefully decorated in modern furniture with a full library in view. The library contains copies of the great classics (Dickens, Mark Twain, and other volumes that I couldn't make out). One could sense that Mr. Cokley was the dominant figure in the household by the way the wife and son focus their attention on him while he spoke. There was a table in the living room where Billy kept his books and schoolwork. They say that they never have to help him with his homework because he knows what he has to do. Occasionally Mr. Cokley may help out with a main problem. Rarely did I ever visit that Mr. Cokley wasn't reading the newspaper. I didn't feel that he was being impolite, it was just that he seemed to have his time well organized and regardless who came around he always read his paper around six-thirty. Billy after finishing his homework would remain sitting at the table while his parents and I continued to talk. The Cokleys are very satisfied with the school in its effort and have not experienced any difficulties. The teachers see the Cokleys to be an ideal family.

Billy is just as quiet as his mother and father and seems to imitate their behavior. His dress is very conservative not quite like most boys of his age. He is neatly dressed at all times; his manners are perfect, and he talks very little at home or school. He apparently loves to read and go with his mother to Bible study. Rarely does he participate in boisterous games on the playground like the other kids.

Family 5 (much involved). The Prince family is a young couple in their late twenties who are the parents of a ten-year-old girl in the fifth grade and a fourteen-year-old boy in the ninth grade. The girl attends Shortridge, and the boy attends parochial school. A great Dane has been a member of the household for nine years. Mr. Prince is very quiet by nature but is a very attentive listener. Mrs. Prince is very talkative and seems to smile and gets excited when she talks. They both are the same height, slender and very neat dressers. Mr. Prince is an office manager for a loan company, and Mrs. Prince is employed by a food processing company.

Observing the home and the way that it is tastefully decorated would lead one to believe that the Prince family's economic status is above the average of the neighborhood which is considered low-income. There are various pieces of abstract art on the wall. The carpet and furniture have been chosen with great care. There were many books observed in this home, various novels and mysteries by authors such as Harold Robbins and Gore Vidal, copies of Business Week, Ebony, Newsweek and The Daily News. Mrs. Prince states that the daughter and Mr. Prince are avid readers while she and her son read what they have to. Her daughter loves mysteries and Bible stories. Both children have library cards. She says that her son does not have too much time for recreational reading because of the heavy work load at his school. He does subscribe to Sports Illustrated. Mrs. Prince and the children are very active in Oakridge Church, and Mrs. Prince sings in the choir. The children attend Sunday school and participate in other youth organizations.

Because Mr. and Mrs. Prince work long hours and have to travel a long way, the children are expected to have their homework completed by the time their parents get home. They are not allowed to have company or let anyone in the house while they are away. Mr. and Mrs. Prince have certain views about school and its teachers. They feel that Shortridge is a good school and is doing an adequate job. However, Mr. Prince feels that in today's society teachers are different than in days gone by. He feels that some reasons why children don't learn are incompetent teachers, teachers who don't care and are no longer dedicated, and some who are just drawing paychecks. On the other side of the coin, discipline problems have hampered teacher effectiveness in the classroom, and that parents are just as responsible for their children's education as the teachers anymore. They both feel that the back to basic approach is the answer to reading problems.

Mary, the daughter who was chosen for the project, is very quiet at home and school. She is very small for her age, and has seemed to inherit these small features from her mother and father. At school she is attentive and is rarely caught talking out in class. She always has her homework completed and is considered a "sweet child" by the teacher.

(2) Mildly Involved Parents

Family 6 (mildly involved). Mr. and Mrs. Jiles are a couple in their early thirties with a family of four boys. Two of the boys are from a previous marriage of Mrs. Jiles. The boys ages are 2, 4, 9, and 10. Mr. Jiles is very tall and neat in appearance and walks with somewhat of a swagger. Mr. Jiles states that he was formerly employed as a disc jockey on the west coast prior to moving to Shortridge. Mr. Jiles, I gather from his conversations, is very bitter about the social system in this country and his inability to find meaningful employment. On every visitation, he had decided on some new venture that he would like to try; however, he felt that whatever the venture, it was doomed to failure because the system does not smile favorably on the underprivileged. He professes to be a writer; however, I was never shown anything that he wrote. He is a good conversationalist and is knowledgeable on a variety of issues.

Mrs. Jiles is a stout woman but very attractive. She, like her husband, talks about the difficulties that she has experienced in trying to find a job after being laid off as a secretary. She feels she was qualified for a number of the jobs for which she has been interviewed but was discriminated against.

The home is sparsely furnished and time had taken its toll on what furniture is there. The ceiling had caved in from a heavy rainstorm and ruined the carpet. Mrs. Jiles was concerned that she didn't know when she would be able to afford new carpet or to get the roof repaired. There were very few books observed in this home with the exception of a worn set of encyclopedias.

Mrs. Jiles appears to be the one responsible for trying to get the two older boys by a previous marriage to improve in their studies. Rarely did I observe Mr. Jiles discipline them or talk about their work. I suspect that there might be some friction because they are not his sons. Mrs. Jiles was very frustrated that at having so much difficulty in trying to get the children interested in their school work. She said that John was beginning to "mess up" in school, and threatened to cut off all privileges at home if they don't "straighten up and fly right." She talks about how well the kids were doing when they were enrolled in the Catholic school because of the strict discipline meted out by the nuns. Because she was unable to pay tuition, she had to send them to Shortridge.

She is satisfied that the school is doing the best it can with the children. Her ex-husband wanted to take the oldest boy to live with him; however Mrs. Jiles is opposed to this. She feels that he will let them get away with everything even though she is not being effective with them. She says that she knows that they watch too much television but she is tired of yelling and does not feel well since a recent operation.

Sam, the son who is a participant in the project, is ten-years-old and appears to always have a mischevious smile on his face. Sam is quiet in school and appears to be "spaced out" according to Mrs. M. Sam rarely has his homework and is made to stay after school to complete it. Sam's mother is concerned that he is becoming involved with a neighborhood gang.

Family 7 (mildly involved). Mr. and Mrs. Covington are a middle-aged couple in their late forties and the parents of three children--two sons, ages 10 and 15, and one daughter 21 living at home. Mr. Covington even in his mid-forties could pass for a professional football player. He is a construction worker and considers himself very fortunate that he has not been laid off. Mr. Covington is very talkative and will monopolize a conversation without really knowing it. Most of his conversation is centered around the good old days when everything was better and his dream of someday moving back to the farm. Mrs. Covington is very quiet and does not talk a lot unless asked direct questions. She complains about having to work such long hours with very little time off and having to travel so far to and from work.

The Covingtons seem to think that Shortridge community is better than most and are in the process of purchasing a home here. Mr. Covington is planning to do most of the remodeling of the house himself. The Covingtons live in a large spacious house that is in dire need of repairs. Mr. Covington states that they are in the process of getting ready to do some repairs, however, money is a problem. The furniture was well worn but had been covered with plastic to protect it for a long time. The only books visible was a set of encyclopedias, the Daily News, and the Tribune--a Black newspaper. Each of the children have their own room.

They feel that the school is doing an adequate job with their son. From their conversations they clearly imply that it was more or less up to the school to educate the children. My observations support this conclusion. They allude to the day when all you had to do was send your children to school and the parents didn't have to worry about anything because the teacher would take care of everything.

Lacy, the participant, is ten-years-old with a mischevious and perpetual smile on his face at home and school. He is ready for any kind of mischief as soon as Mrs. Q turns her back. He appears to have been pampered by being the youngest in the family. On most visits, he always tried to sit on the couch between his mother and father. If he was reprimanded for sitting there, he always feigned hurt and they would ask him to sit back down at which time he broke into his perpetual smile. He is inconsistent in doing his homework and Mrs. Q has had to write letters home about him. After a visit by his mother he has improved some.

Family 8 (mildly involved). Mr. and Mrs. Dockery are in their mid-thirties and the parents of three children--two boys ages 9 and 10 and one baby daughter about 6 months. They both are very talkative and are very easy to talk to. Mr. Dockery works for a pharmaceutical company and Mrs. Dockery works as a secretary. The house is large and spacious but needs many repairs. Mr. and Mrs. Dockery express great joy of being able to purchase this house eventhough it needs repairs just to get out of the projects which Mr. Dockery described as not living but merely existing. He stated how difficult it had been laid off and the financial burden has been most great for his wife. In spite of this, the house is kept immaculate and the furniture is almost new. There are three bedrooms upstairs.

The Dockeries are both working parents and the boys have a rigid schedule to follow after school. Mrs. Dockery appears to be a little more hostile toward the school than Mr. Dockery. She feels that expectations of the teachers are sometimes unreasonable, as for example, when they expect attendance at meetings in the middle of the day when everyone is working. She also feels that teachers talk to parents, "they don't explain things enough."

Carl, the participant, is much too heavy for his age and is very quiet. Ms. Z states that he seems to be far away in his thoughts at times in the classroom. He does most of his homework assignments and experiences very few problems with the teacher. He says that he likes to read occassionally but loves to play football and watch television.

Family 9 (mildly involved). Mr. and Mrs. Bronson are in their mid-forties and the parents of a boy 10 and a girl 9. I have never met Mr. Bronson, who is a night supervisor at the post office and works the night shift. Mrs. Bronson is somewhat overweight and speaks of having hypertension. They own a beautiful home on the outskirts of Shortridge community. Hanging on the wall are numerous abstract paintings by her stepson (Mr. Bronson's by a previous marriage). There were copies of overdue books from the library and Mrs. Bronson was afraid that if she took them back she couldn't afford the penalty because she had had them out so long.

Mrs. Bronson is a part time paid employee at the school, however, she volunteers many hours in helping the teachers correct papers and do other things. Mrs. Bronson is also the vice president of the home and school association, and is very active in the church.

Mrs. Bronson admitted that she had held some negative assumptions about the school and teachers which she found not to be true. Now that she is working at the school, she sees discipline as a real problem and she finds that most teachers work very hard. She believes that parents and teacher must work very closely together in working with children. Mrs. Bronson admits that she has not been too successful in motivating Tim, the participant, to do his homework and cut down on t.v. She says that she can't help him with his homework because she doesn't know how to do the math. She is very frustrated about the t.v. because her daughter is beginning to fall into a pattern of too much t.v. watching. Mrs. Bronson is not one to demand that her children do a lot.

Tim is small in stature for his age as compared to the other boys in his class. He rarely does his homework even though his mother and the teacher yells at him constantly. Tim is very quiet at school but is very talkative at home. He enjoys reading Sports Illustrated and has discussed many articles that he has read with me. He has collected football cards and pictures of every player in the National Football League. He knows most of the players by name. Whenever basketball games are on t.v., Tim sits down and makes up a score card for each player. He loves to talk about his card collection and sports. Yet in school, he is very quiet and gets reprimanded for not having his homework and makes excuses to get out of the room to ask his mother questions.

Mrs. Bronson does not try to control what is being watched although she may yell at him to do his homework, she will rarely cut off the television and will continue to watch with him. She states that every now and then when Tim's father threatens him with punishment, Tim will do better for a while but eventually he returns to his errant ways.

(3) Discussion

There is a wide range of differences in the ages of the parents. The age ranges for the parents is approximately 28 to 55 years. Possibly age difference accounts for the one difference in how the school is viewed. For instance, older parents seem to feel that the school should assume more responsibilities and the parents less for the literacy development of children. They see the school as more qualified in this area. The younger parents see that for total literacy development it has to be more of a partnership.

The following is a breakdown of age differences

Much Involved	Younger parents	Older Parents
	Twenties & Thirties	Fourties & Fifties
	Prince Crumshank Mabe Baker	Cokley
Mildly Involved		
	Dockery Jiles	Covington Bronson

Even though, of the older families fall under less involved it doesn't appear from their conversations that their expectations are any less than the younger families who are classified as much involved. It appears that the older families have been out of school longer and they feel incapable of dealing with the homework and cite how they feel that education is more or less the schools responsibilities and their responsibilities lies in providing the basic needs for their children. Even though, Mr. Cokley is seen by the teachers as much involved, it is because the son always has his homework and is not a behavior problem. However, in talking with Mr. and Mrs. Cokley one does not get the feeling that they consider themselves much involved. Mr. Cokley feels that from his conversation that a lot is demanded of his son but not so much because of the school. He states that he was raised by parents who left it up to the school to educate while they were to fulfill basic needs with the school not demanding so much of the parents except foor and clothing and the parents not demand anything from the school with the exception of teaching the children how to read and write. Furthermore, never having to go to school unless there is a problem.

It also appears that the supposedly much involved younger parent have more formal training and have more jobs that requires more skills than those that are supposedly mildly involved. As a result their thinking about literacy is somewhat different. It does not appear, however, that any of the families regardless of training have less expectations for the children. Most of them expected their children to at least complete high school if not college and some might be able to go on to a trade school. Few parents appeared to be politically active. They all stated that they voted at one time or another, however, that was the essence of their political involvement unless there were some major concerns affecting the community. Major concerns appeared to be for all families, feed their children, inflation, staying employed, educating the children, and any other problem that would affect their families as a whole.

Over half the families were purchasing their homes in Shortridge (Prince, Cokley, Bakers, Dockery, Covington, Bronson), they didn't seem to be overly enthusiastic about living in this neighborhood. Most felt that it was better than most of the neighborhoods that they had moved from. The economic status of the families vary with three families' incomes appearing to be high for this neighborhood (Prince, Cokley, and Crumshank), two families with medium incomes (Baker, Bronson), and four low income (Covington, Dockery, Jiles, and Mabe). This information is based on information gained from parents, observations in the home, and the number and type of games, books, etc. available for their children.

E. ISSUES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Introduction

In section III I discussed a number of issues related to parent involvement in the schooling of their children as perceived by teachers. In the present section I take up those issues again. Here I present my findings as to the parent perceptions of those issues and my observations, as to the reality of parent involvement. In presenting these findings I rely heavily upon my close observations of the Baker and Jiles families and bring in information gleaned from the other family observations as support.

(1) Homework

At the time of day I arrived at the homes, students usually were already in the process of working on or had completed their homework. Children were eager for me to see their work and sometimes asked my opinion. All of the parents approved of homework; they felt it was necessary for academic development, and they didn't believe that schooling should end when the child came home, also, they had had homework when they were growing up.

Most of the parents expected their children to complete their homework as soon as they arrived from school.

Family 1--Bakers:

Mrs. Baker says her daughter rarely needs help with homework; however, she has to spend a great deal of time with her younger son. She is afraid that, even if the daughter does need help, she will not be able to provide it because she doesn't understand some of the work.

> Homework is a trip, especially when parents don't know how to do it. When my daughter started coming here with work and I didn't know how to do it, I would write a letter and ask the teacher could I sit in class. Because I thought the work was easy until she started asking questions. I found out I didn't know anything about it.

Mrs. Baker is a part time volunteer at the school and is always in her children's classrooms trying to find ways to help them.

She reflects that parents who are unable to get to school to find out how to do homework must have a difficult time trying to help their children. After school Mrs. Baker sometimes plays Backgammon with her daughter or reads to her son. After her soap operas go off, she often checks her son's writing and makes him practice it. The children do well in school. Mrs. Baker is flexible but demanding of the children. She requires them to watch television programs that she hopes will have a worthwhile impact--that will perhaps keep them from going to jail or her daughter from getting pregnant. The children are not allowed to roam the neighborhood at will. If they go out, they are expected to return by a specified time. Mr. Baker has spent a lot of time setting the basement up so that the children will have a place to play. In the basement are books, games, home movies, and toys. Mrs.

Baker states that it is her task to see that homework and other responsibilities are completed by the children. Mr. Baker leaves early in the morning for work and returns late in the evening. He has a collection of old comic books and western movies and has shown some of the latter to his son's first grade class.

Family 6--Mr. and Mrs. Jiles:

At the home of the Jiles' family, Sam and his brother are lying on the floor playing a card game called "War". I sit on the floor with them, and they try to teach me the game. There are television sets going full blast upstairs and downstairs. The program is "Starsky and Hutch". While we are playing, I ask if they have completed their homework. Both boys state that they haven't any to complete. I know that this is not the case because Mrs. M gives homework every night. Mrs. Jiles comes downstairs with the two younger boys who are screaming and yelling.

Mr. Jiles goes upstairs. Mrs. Jiles talks about her recent stay in the hospital for pneumonia and about her sister, who is preparing to have a major operation. The television is blasting and all four boys are screaming at the tops of their voices.

Mrs. Jiles had a difficult time getting the boys to do their homework. She has threatened not to buy new clothes for them if they don't improve. On subsequent visits, only one time did I observe the children doing homework. The television is blasting, however, and the younger two boys are yelling. Mr. Jiles rarely reprimands the boys, and Mrs. Jiles' screaming seems to have little effect.

Mother of Family 2:

> What I basically do is, since I know what he is supposed to do, I let him do his homework, do it all. Then I come behind him and check it. If it is not right, I bring it to him and point out his mistakes and where to find it. I don't do it myself. He has to do it all on his own because if they have a test, I won't be there to answer the questions for him; he has to learn to do it himself.

Mother of Family 3:

> I am here everyday when they get home, so I look to see what they have for homework to make sure that

> they do it. They tell me if they are having problems in some subjects. I make extra sure to check that. Before I started back to school, it was a different thing all together. Now we have this busy day because you see I want the homework done before I leave to go to school. So if I am not there to watch, I know that it is done.

Completing homework in Family 4's home is done according to a strict schedule. The child has a table set up in the dining area with all of his books and school work. If there is a problem, he is helped by his father, who is retired. Family 5's mother stated.

> We have a policy that ours do their homework as soon as they come home from school, because their mind is still going as far as school is concerned.

In Family 7, the children are expected to do their work without much help from the parents. The parents arrive home from work at night, and the two older children, 22 years and 16 years of age, are expected to see that the younger child does his work. Children in Family 8 and 9 are expected to do their homework as soon as they get home. However, children in Family 8 have a tendency to play around, and they may not get to it. In Family 9, the mother admits that she has not been successful in motivating her son to complete his homework.

In the classrooms I noted that the teachers always told the child to "get your mother to sign your homework." My observations in the homes verified that the mothers assume most of the responsibility for homework. It was explained by mothers that they felt that it was their responsibility--even the ones who worked full time. They reasoned that after father had worked all day, he didn't feel like being bothered. However, they stated that if the child was resistant, father often stepped in to wield a strong hand. While visiting the Baker Family (Case Study), I asked who assumed responsibility for the children in completing homework. Mr. and Mrs. Baker looked at each other and smiled. Mrs. Baker said,

> Mother. Father eats, father lays down; Mother does all the helping with homework 105% of the time. You have to look at his point of view; he leaves before the children gets up. He comes in, he's tired from working on the job all day long. You can't depend on him coming in helping

> them kids with their homework. So the best time he will work with them is on Saturday and Sunday. If I tell him Billy has been acting in the classroom, he will get him and punish him on Saturday. He will make him stay in his room and he can't come out until he does his work.

Family 7:

> I guess that teachers take for granted that mothers would be more prone than daddy to pick up the report card. The mother has all the dealing with the child in school, anyway. That is all it is to it. Unless there is the case where the mother and father are separated. Then the father might play a role. Basically, when it comes right down to the school, as far as the children are concerned, it is left on the mother. That goes for homework, the report card, that goes for school visits.

Family 9:

> Daddy ain't never home. Daddy is a hard person to catch up with. Well, there is another thing, too. I guess they feel like, well, mommy ain't got nothing to do, anyway. Even if mother works, it is her responsibility. The husband is the one worrying about the bills, so forth and so on. I guess they feel that when it comes down to the children and school, it is a petty problem.

Some parents feel that the teachers' policies regarding homework are contradictory. These parents are confused about whether the teachers expect them to help with homework or just check it. The following comments were made by parents:

Family 1--Mrs. Baker:

> They were discussing at school about we were suppose to check homework and sign it. So I raised my hand and said, "How are you suppose to check it if you don't know how to do it?" And it was stated to me by the principal, "You ain't got to know how to do it." I told them, I refuse to sign anything that I don't know how to do. I told them, "You are constantly telling us we are suppose to be a family--the teacher, parent and child are suppose to work together. So why should I put my name on something that I don't know what is right or wrong, and then I am looking like a fool--right?" To me that is the way I felt.

If I don't know how to do it, I won't sign it because the first thing they will say is this parent don't know how to do this. Don't help the child check over it to see if it's right. Now if you are not suppose to help the child, why check over it to see if it is right? They are telling you two things, sign it and make sure it is right. What about those parents who didn't finish school? Some may have finished fifth and sixth grade, how do they know what is right or wrong? If they never had that in their life, that is making that parent look like a fool. Every answer that child gives is wrong. Right? So isn't it the teacher's job to get that parent or send a diagram or example to show how this work is done?

Family 7:

You know there is another thing that they do that I don't approve of. I know when we were going to school, teachers sent home books. Like if you had history you had history. You had a book that showed you examples how the work was suppose to be done, and you took it from there, more or less. They got this thing now where a child has to copy his homework off the board. Now if a child makes a mistake and don't complete a sentence or mispelled a word wrong, or whatever it may be, you are up the creek. You won't know what it is all about. Now a parent can't help with the homework if they don't understand what is being wrote down there for that matter. That makes it kind of hard. I went through that problem quite a bit. Trying to sit there, decipher what she had written. They don't know what they wrote. You can't understand what they wrote, so how you going to help them with their homework.

Family 8:

You know this new policy that they got now is that teachers will tell you right quick, "Don't help your children withtheir homework." In other words, you see that they do it, but don't help them with it. I don't think that is too fair because, say, something new that they are going into, you know what I mean, you want them to get the best mark that they can. That is where your role comes in, too. To try and teach them as much as you can at home so when they go back to school they will be a little prepared. Like I said, I don't think it is fair for them to

> tell you don't help them with their homework because any parent that is interested in their child's schoolwork is going to help with it. If they don't, they are a fool.

Summary

Even though parents are not involved equally with homework, they all feel that it is a major responsibility to help out at home to the best of their ability and knowledge. Families differ in the method and extent of inconvenienice of working hours and travel distances in addition to inadequate knowledge about how to help with homework. Although parents are asked simply to "check" the homework by the teachers, and not to correct it, they still feel the need to know what they are doing so as not to appear dumb to the teachers. Differences in individuals' lifestyles and understandings of the school's expectations appear to influence the way families cope with homework.

If there are differences in the families as two groups it does not appear to be the result of more or less caring but circumstances that teachers may be unaware of that hampers their ability to meet school expectations. The families in the much involved group appear to have more formal training, have better economic positions, and a clearer concept of schooling. Age may also be a factor because some of the older parents appear less secure about their abilities to help their children overall. It appeared that mother was primarily responsible for seeing that homework was completed in all homes. The typical pattern seems for "daddy to step in" if report cards and doing homework becomes a problem at home. The mothers seemed to accept this because some of their husbands work long hours and overtime or worked at night. Furthermore, it was stated that it was difficult for low-income fathers to have as much time to spend with their children doing homework because of working extra jobs for economic reasons.

There was a strong feeling among some of the parents that the teachers send out contradictory signals about homework whether they mean to or not. That can be confusing to the parents. The parents as stated previously feel that homework can be a problem if you don't know how to do it. They feel that even though teachers say they should just check it that they really feel that teachers mean that parents should be helping. If parents just check the homework and send it back to school and the work is wrong, it will appear that the parents just glanced at it without really looking at the homework. Like Mrs. Baker asked, if we are not to help or correct it, why even check at all? In most of the home visits, parents were observed trying to help or check with their children's homework.

(2) Television

The teachers generalized that a lot of television was being watched in the homes. They also believed that parents placed few restrictions on the children's viewing habits and rarely discussed with the children what they viewed. They formed their generalizations and assumptions from information gleaned from the conversations of their students about television viewing habits.

Out of the nine homes observed, six families (Families 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7) do place restrictions on the viewing habits of the children. They allow the children to watch any two shows that they want after finishing their homework. Mrs. Baker (Family 1--Case Study) selects certain programs for her daughter to watch that deal with sex, jail, or staying out of trouble. "I have told her after she sees what is happening and she gets in trouble, she better not call me." The mother of Family 2 states that she and her son watch television together:

> He has his favorites and some of his favorites are some of the ones I like, so we sit and we watch and laugh at most of the same things; and then we discuss it and we both give our points on what was funny and what we thought wasn't funny.

Family 3's mother states: "After the kids do their homework, they can look at television. They're not really outside children. They'd rather be inside, so I can't say 'no television.'" The Jileses (Family 6--Case Study) and Families 8 and 9 did not appear to place many restrictions on the quantity of television being watched in the home.

Even the parents who set limits agreed that the children watched too much television. The reasons given for allowing excessive television watching in the homes were (1) lack of recreational facilities in the immediate community--the children had to travel far outside the confines of the community to use recreational facilities (playground, swimming pool, etc.); (2) economic constraints--the limited resources of parents prevent them seeking entertainment outside the community; (3) concern about children's safety--fearing gang and other crime in the streets parents restrict children's movements; and (4) lack of control of children--some parents just don't know how to keep their chidlren from watching too much television.

(3) Reading

The reading materials in the home range from the worn set of encyclopedias observed in the Jiles (Family 6--Case Study) home to the well-stocked library of Family 4. Books and magazines observed in the home were such popular black magazines as Jet, a weekly magazine about black news and happenings from all across the nation; Ebony, a monthly black magazine that features stories about successful blacks as well as articles on black history, child care, black entertainment, and cooking Black Stars, a monthly magazine about black entertainers; Ebony Junior, a monthly magazine that features children's stories, games, riddles, and jokes; and The Tribune, a weekly black newspaper. Other materials observed were Business Week, Newsweek, Teens, Weekly Readers (books that can be ordered at school by the children), daily newspapers, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and Bibles.

Parents agreed with teachers that not enough reading was being done in the home. They attributed this, however, to factors other than not caring, as speculated by the teachers. Some of those factors are as follows: (1) inadequate knowledge about ways to motivate reading in the home: (2) inadequate knowledge about selection of books according to reading level, even though children's interests are known; (3) parent reading habits--most parents admitted that they read very little; (4) lack of assistance from teachers--parents feel that teachers criticize them unjustly for not motivating reading (the teachers have -een trained to motivate reading and are not doing much better). In most of the families, the children read, although not enough to suit the parents.

Lisa Baker (Family 1--Case Study) likes to read only teen magazines as well as Jet and Ebony. According to her mother, she used to love to read when she was in the lower grades (2nd and 3rd) but lately has begun to hate most reading. The mother in family 2 reads Bible stories to her son because he hates to read. The mother states,

> He could read better, but I am not stressing the point as much because he didn't like to read at all. He's at the point where I use to try and force him to read and make him read till he'd cry and then he would read and wouldn't understand. So now, he's reading and I'm not pressuring him to read.

All of the homes had a variety of reading materials except Family 6 (Case Study); and families in both groups read some for enjoyment.

(4) Coming to School Well Dressed, Well Fed and Well Rested

The parents are somewhat angered by being told to send their children well dressed, well fed, and well rested. They don't take issue so much with the well-rested as the other two. Mrs. Jiles (Family 6):

> How can they know what your situation is about feeding and clothing your families? I send my child to school looking the best and feeding him the best I can. I don't think it is the school's place to try and tell you what to buy and what you can afford. They make it sound like we are sending our children to school dirty.

Family 8:

> What if parents can't send their children well dressed? Does that mean the child is dumb? What does it have to do with learning?

Mrs. Baker (Family 1) states that she is "very upset" about this part of the expectations:

> They sent a letter home saying your child has to do this, your child has to do that. They must come to school clean, have the proper kind of clothes. So I refused to sign the paper. I said to my daughter, "By this paper, they are trying to make you all sound better than any kids in the school." So the vice principal approached me in the lunch room and I told him, "You let me tell you one thing,

> you can catch a kid out here who don't have anything. They don't have money to get a comb. They don't have money to buy clothes. I say they can be walking around here with rags on. What is on the outside doesn't count. They can be walking around here with a brain that is out of sight. And that is all that counts. You don't go by whether Betty Lou is wearing pleats today. He (vice principal) said, "That is not what we mean." I said, "By reading that paper, that is the understanding I got." Like they are suppose to come to school with this or that on. If they didn't, they weren't allowed into the program. Because all our kids comes to school clean. Our parents are doing the best that they can. Times are rough; you can only do so much to keep the roof over your head. It appears that a lot of the teachers act like our kids can't meet their standards.

Other parents in both groups had general comments about these issues; however, the consensus was that, even though they didn't quite feel that the school was saying that they were sending their kids to school dirty or raggedy, they didn't feel that the school should tell them what to wear or eat: they felt also that the school would never make such demands of white parents.

Most of the children that I observed at Shortridge were neatly dressed. Parents say that people in this community are out of work a lot and have to do the best they can when it comes to feeding and clothing their children.

Six of the families had bedtime schedules; children were expected to be in bed no later than nine o'clock.

(5) Values Training

Respect and good attitudes instilled within the child are expectations that the teachers feel that parents should be responsible for that some parents should show more concern about.

The parents feel that even though they try to raise their children with respect they cannot control the way their kids react away from home; also that their are other parents who may not be doing the same job of teaching their children respect as they are. They feel that kids also learn how to be disrespectful and develop bad attitudes at school. Some parents feel that teachers help perpetuate negative attitudes by yelling and humiliating children in front of their peers and not respecting the children as people.

Family 3's daughter had a problem at school with the teacher. When the mother decided that the problem was one of disrespect on the part of her daughter she went to the school, made her daughter apologize to the teacher and threatened her with a whipping if it happened again.

Parents indicated that the teachers don't always let them know when their children are being disrespectful. As a result the assumptions that parents condone this kind of behavior goes unchallenged.

> She didn't tell me that Mabel had done something wrong. I noticed that she was too quiet, and that she had to stay after school. She told me it was the teacher's fault. I didn't take her word for it, I went to the school and found out what the problem was. I told Mabel that if this happened again, I was going to whip her but right in front of the class. But sometimes teachers don't let you know and they think you don't care. Parents can't always know what is going on if the teachers don't let them know. (Family 3)

All of the parents insist that they try and teach their children proper behavior and to have respect for not only the teachers but for everyone. However, they feel strongly that teachers should give just as much respect to the students as they demand for themselves.

F. Home and School Relationship

(1) Teacher Assumptions

There is a feeling among some of the parents that the relationships that exist between the home and school is strained because of certain assumptions that the school holds about them, despite the fact that they believe Shortridge has more parent involvement than any school in the district; that the principal tries very hard to make parents welcome and be receptive. Some excerpts from my notes illustrate this:

Mrs. Baker (Family 1--Case Study)

> Some teachers are like human beings here. They'll write you a letter, make a phone call, and tell you what is going on. (However,) they (teachers) complain that parents are not spending enough time with their kids or helping them read. Well, what

> are their duties? Aren't their duties to teach those kids to read? How can you promote one child all the way through school and he can't write? They don't care, I guess that is the parents shoulders, you understand. Teacher does no wrong. Everything is the parents fault. The child turns out gay it is the parents fault. If the kid doesn't like school, something is wrong at home. How does the teacher know? Do they go to those peoples home and talk to them and try and find out what is going on? Do they ask the child why he doesn't like school? No, they reach their own conclusions.

(Family 3)

> I never cared for the neighborhood school per se. I think Shortridge is a good school. I don't think that they give the parents enough credit for what we try to do with our children at home?

(Family 2)

> I feel that the school is doing a good job with my son and I feel welcome when I go to the shcool. Parents have to work to help build a good relationship as well as the teachers.

Mrs. Jiles (Family 6--Case Study)

> My son jokingly made reference to being a gang member and was going to put his gang on someone who was bothering him. Before I knew anything, he was having all kinds of problems at school and no one even really let me know what was going on. They treated him like they thought he really belonged to a gang. I took him out of the school because I knew that they (teachers) would always be on his case.

(Family 8) feels that:

> Teachers do not live in the area of the school and yet assume that they know everything that is going on in the home. I also don't understand how my son can make "A" in social studies, "A" in science, and get a "D" in reading. I just don't understand it."

(Family 9)

> Parents feel that it is the teacher's job to educate the children I use to feel that way until I got connected around with the school. Now I see that parents and teachers have to work together.

While parents are far from unanimous, some of the major issues they feel hinders developing a good school-home relationship are: school policies, being blamed for things that goes wrong with their children over which they have no control, threatened expulsion of their children from Academic Plus if the parent does not become involved without concern for time constraints, keeping their children after school and not making expectations clear.

(2) Effects of Academics Plus.

Some of the parents who believe that Academics Plus is a good program feel the school uses it as a threat to keep parents in line by constantly reminding them that if their child does not meet specifications of the contract they will be put out of the program, and further, if the child is put out of the program this will hinder admittance to a good junior high school. Parents also feel that the way students are chosen for Academics Plus causes divisiveness in the community. Much of the problem is one of communication.

Seven of the families express concern about the problems that limit the relationship while two (Family 5 and Family 7) didn't have many thoughts one way or the other.

(3) Past vs. future.

A lot of the parents feel that teachers were more dedicated in the old days and parents ahd less responsibilities. Parents also believe that parenting was easier in the old days because everyone looked after each other's children; that kids had more respect for teachers and that teachers were someone to look up to and be admired. Today many teachers have become more concerned about the dollar and less concerned about children. However, they still feel that parents are partly responsible for the problem, because they are prone to take the side of the child before finding out what happens at shcool. They will no longer discipline their children at home leaving it to the teacher thereby increasing discipline problems in the school.

On the other side parents indicated that when they were growing up the teacher lived in the neighborhood, went to the same church, and shopped at the same stores. Now very few teachers live in the neighborhood and rarely come back unless it is a special program or come to work. They also feel that teachers don't dress the way they use to in the old days. That in the past everyone wanted to be a teacher because of how nice they looked. Now you can't tell some of the teachers from someone out on the street.

They were not speaking specifically about the teachers at Shortridge but teachers in general. One parent believes that, (Family 7),

> Teachers spend too much time playing with the children, trying to be their friends. In the old days the teacher didn't care about being your friend all they wanted to do was teach you.

He goes on to suggest that the old days might have been better but he feels teachers today are more qualified and provide more experiences for the children. Mrs. Baker liked the past better because,

> You didn't have to worry about strikes. Now you pray every September that school will get off to a good start without a strike. We use to not have that to worry about.

Mrs. Baker may sum the feelings up best:

> If is getting just as hard to be a good teacher as it is to be a good parent the way things are going in this world today. Neither teachers nor parents has an easy job.

G. Communication of School Expectations

The school uses many modes of communication in trying to make parents aware of the expectations of the school. A calendar is sent home with the child at the beginning of each month with a list of events to be held at school that are of importance to the parents. (Example: Election Day Tues. 4, School Closed Veterans Day, Home and School General Meeting Wednesday 12, American Education Week, "Back To School Day" Wednesday 19, etc.) Parents' Teas are held where school policy and expectations for parents and students are spelled out, Mock School Days are held where parents are allowed to play the role of the students and are led through a typical day at school including a homework assignment that must be completed and returned to the school the next day by the child, class observance day--an opportunity to sit in and watch the class in action, not to talk to the teacher, progress reports are sent home on a monthly basis, report cards are sent home quarterly and teachers write notes and make telephone calls when necessary. The teachers feel that in spite of all methods used in making expectations known and trying to communicate with parents some parents still do not respond.

(Family 3) states,

> I enjoyed the Mock School Day because it let me know

> what Mable (participant) would be doing all day in school and what kind or work she was expected to do but a lot of parents missed it because they had to work.

(Family 2),

> I used one of my sick days to attend the Mock School Day and loved the idea of going back into the classroom. The teachers led us through all the activities that the children go through and it was a lot of fun. I wish they could do it more often because it let the parents know what is going on. It was too bad that more parents couldn't have been there.

Mrs. Baker (Family 1) and (Family 9) also attended. Mrs. Baker (Family 1),

> Some of the notes and calendars never reach this house because they get lost between here (school) and home.

While parents appreciate these efforts, they are concerned that they have no say so in planning the time when parents and teachers get together. They note that most programs and conferences are held at the school and are held at times when it is convenient for the teachers. For parents to take off time to get to school at the times that teachers have set for them often means long travel time which may involve transfering to two or three modes of public transportation, threatened loss of job for having to take off, and that on top of the loss of half a day's pay. This loss may spell the difference of not having enough money to fulfill the basic needs of the family. Other reasons given for not responding to requests for attendance at meetings are shortages of babysitters, feelings of intimidation by teachers because of lack of formal training,and notes and calendars not arriving at home with the children.

Parents state that if some of these meetings and conferences were held at night they could attend because they could bring the children with them or leave them home with older sisters or brothers. Teachers on the other hand who don't live close by are afraid to come back into the neighborhood at night out of fear of what may happen to them in the neighborhood.

One final comment heard about school-home relationships has to do with the direction of interaction. The parents are not happy that teachers always expect parents to come to school but rarely do teachers visit their homes. They feel that it would be impossible for teachers to visit all homes, however, it would be nice to hear that some teacher visited a home.

V. CONCLUSIONS

It is a widely held belief among educators that for school to effectively promote literacy, there must be a partnership between home and school. Indeed, in many schools, as is the case in Shortridge, the amount and nature of parent involvement and the school's perception of parents attitude are explicitly stated criteria for evaluating children. The research presented here addresses notions of what parent involvement is and how it affects students literacy skills performance. Teachers frequently identify non-supportive parent attitudes as a problem. Taking this concern as a starting point, we set out to examine: (1) teacher expectations for and perceptions of parental involvement in schooling; (2) parent's perception of school expectations, and: (3) how the teacher and parent perspectives meshed or conflicted.

The teachers listed a number of expectations for parents. If these expectations were not met by parents, teachers then generalized that parents didn't care about the child's literacy development.

The major expectations that teachers held were checking homework, supervising television watching of the students, seeing that they read, communicating with the school on a continuous basis, working to develop the parent school relationship, and sending the child to school well rested, well fed, and well-dressed. Failure of parents to fulfill any of the above expectations was interpretted by teachers as not caring

Nine families, selected by the teachers, were observed in the study. Four families that the teachers felt were mildly involved and five that the teachers felt were much involved. The teachers perceived certain problems and had certain impressions of the home and parents. In my observations of the parents and their homes, I found some of the teachers perceptions to be partially accurate. But because teacher perceptions were based on assumptions rather than adequate knowledge, their generalizations were often unjustified.

In this section I will summarize my findings on parent and teacher perceptions, the conflicts and discrepancies in perceptions will be identified and described and explanations for their existance offered.

Homework is expected to be checked and signed by the parents every night. Not to do so is seen as not caring. I found that all parents in the study agreed that homework was important. Because they didn't check the homework did not always mean they didn't care. There were often other circumstances that prevented them from checking the homework. For instance, although teachers said that they only wanted parents to check homework, many parents were confused about whether they should simply check or carefully help with assignments.

Some parents explain that if they check the work and find something wrong on the paper and sign without correcting it, they feel that the teachers will think them dumb or that they were not concerned enough to check it more closely. On the other hand, if they help the child might be reprimanded for getting help. The parent can't help if they are not to correct anything wonder why they have to bother to check it.

Attending a parent tea where expectations of the program were explained to the parents, I found evidence for parents confusion about contradictory demands concerning homework. Ms. Z, when explaining homework to parents, made this statement:

> Your job is to read it (homework), did they follow directions; have the science questions been answered in complete sentences; did they answer it in two words; no periods, no capital letters, no punctuation. Then we have parents, I am not saying you parents, I am talking in general, will sign top of homework to be passed in sloppily done, misspelled words, misspelled spelling words all the incorrect words on there. Nothing is followed from the home assignment; you read the home assignment and then just see that the homework assignment is done.

Reading most of the above passage one would gather that parents are expected to help with homework rather than just checking it. On the other hand, reading the last sentence of the passage, it would appear that the teacher feels that she is only asking the parents to check it. These are illustrative of the discrepancies and contradictions that parents feel are confusing. Furthermore, there are parents especially those that are depicted as being mildly involved that feel they lack adequate knowledge or formal training to help their children since the curriculum has changed so much since they were in school. The parents in this study who are the most involved and have little problem with homework, have had more formal training, more professional type positions, and more books in the home. Because the life style of these families is more compatible with school life they are seen as more involved. One must question seriously whether "lack of caring" is a just label for those whose life styles are somewhat different. These parents feel it would be helpful if the demands were reiterated on a continuing basis rather than merely on initial contact. This kind of communication might aid in clarifying expectations.

It appears that the reason for this conflict between parent and teacher about homework finds its source in contradictions such as those depicted in the quote above, lack of adequate knowledge to help children and some lack of on-going communication. There is little evidence to suggest that parents simply "don't care". It appears that the teachers are not aware that they are sending out these contradictory signals. Further, the teachers may lack adequate knowledge about formal training of their parents and they may not feel it necessary to continually clarify these expectations.

Another source of conflict concerns television. The teachers complain that very little supervision or attention is paid to what is being watched and unlimited hours are spent by the children watching television. The teachers were right about television being watched in the home, however, the notion that parents didn't supervise or exert influence over what was being watched was inaccurate. I found that most of the parents in the study do supervise television. Those parents that don't, have sensible reasons which should be of concern and interest to the school. I found that most parents try to keep informed of major television specials and programs that have to do with literacy development and demand that their children watch them. Many of the major television specials that had been viewed by the parents and their children were Roots, Holocaust, Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, Scared Straight (a special televison program about life in prison developed by prisoners in Rahay, New Jersey), and many other weekly programs that parents felt had educational value.

Parents admit that their children watch a lot of television and they express concern about it. However, they feel that their decision to allow such viewing habits is defensible. They list the reasons as limited recreational facilities. The parents explain that there are no recreational facilities in the immediate area. Their children are not allowed to travel far outside of the neighborhood or other playgrounds or play in the street because of the danger of neighborhood gangs and crime in the street. As a result children stay inside and watch television. A second reason for watching television is a matter of economics. Parents state that because of their limited income, they cannot afford the luxury of going to movies or seek activities outside of the neighborhood because of the expense involved. All this results in television being the main recreational activity for the family.

Most of the parents chosen for the project did have schedules for watching television during school days. Those families who did not have schedules expressed just as much concern about the problem but appeared not to do anything about it. In my observations, it appears that families do watch a lot of television, supervised and unsupervised, but so much not because they are not aware or don't care; but because their economic status limits their choices for other forms of recreation.

The notion that not enough reading was going on in the home by parents and that parents were not doing enough to promote reading in the homes needs clarifying. I observed a number of books in the home, more of a variety in some than in others. Reading was important to the families. Five of the students in the project had library cards and two others had cards at one time or another. Parents mentioned that because the children having so much homework to complete, there is very little time for reading. They add that their children often don't read beyond what they have too, and that they would rather watch television than read. Children in both groups read what is available in the home. Parents point out that the teachers themselves haven't been too successful in teaching and motivating the children to read. Yet, they are supposed to be trained to do this. If teachers with formal training have not been able to accomplish the task of motivating reading, parents ask how teachers can blame them for their inadequacies. Furthermore, parents suggest that because some teachers have not taught the basic skills necessary for reading, children lack the skills to do independent reading.

Parents are concerned about reading. They see it as important in their children's development and a prerequisite for their children's getting enrolled into better elementary and high schools. Their concern is just as great and frustrating as the teachers. They are concerned about their own lack of knowledge about what to do about it. These were concerns expressed in some way by all parents. Consider, Mrs. Jiles, who was considered a "mildly involved parent" had no other books in her house besides one set of well worn encyclopedias. She insisted that she tried to get her sons to read them without much success. Through my observations, I concluded that parents are concerned but need a lot of help in trying to cope with this national problem. It would appear that the implications here are for teachers and parents to share their concern and techniques on how to motivate reading.

The school uses many modes of communication in trying to establish relationships with parents and make them aware of the school expectations. The teachers indicate that in spite of their efforts, parents don't respond or appear to care. The reality is that some of the ways that are used to communicate expectations to the parents are only partially effective for a number of reasons. Two examples are the "parents tea" and the "mock school day". Both of which are good ideas and are the two major occasions for informing the parents. However, their reason for being partially effective lies in the fact that they are held at a time of the day (2:00) when it is inconvenient for parents to attend because they are working. The parents point out that for them to get to school at the times that teachers have scheduled these events, means time off for long traveling time, added expense and time for trains or buses, not to mention the half a day's lost pay!

Another problem associated with communication is that parents feel that they have no say in planning the time when parents and teachers get together. Conferences and programs that would allow parents and teachers to interact are held at times when it is only convenient for the teachers and not the parents. Parents feel that some of the meetings and conferences should be held at night, then more parents would be able to attend.

The findings of this study suggest that parents attendance and involvement can be improved if parents can have input and be included in planning conferences and activities that can be held at school.

There are a number of assumptions that are held by both groups, parents and teachers, that limit the growth of a cooperative relationship between home and school. Both groups are justified in some of their assumptions. It appears that these assumptions stem from the lack of communication and inadequate knowledge by parents about what teachers are really like and what goes on in the school; teachers assumptions stem from inadequate knowledge about families and what goes on in the home. It appears that both relished the idea of a good relationship between the two. Further, having a good relationship benefits the child, teacher, and parent.

Shortridge appears to have a better relationship with the community than most schools in spite of the assumptions held by both groups, because there is a strong commitment on the part of the principal, teachers, and parents to develop a partnership between home and school. According to the parents and teachers my observations, and conversations with both groups that the more they interact, the better the relationship. Further this increased interaction fosters a more accurate picture of each groups' point of view. Improving this relationship appears to hinge on continued interaction and more effective communication by both groups.

Parents must find more time to visit the school and observe what is going on. Teachers must try and time events and conferences that will not conflict to strongly with work schedules and solicit opinions from parents about time to come to the school that will be feasible for both groups.

The idea of the school demanding that the parents send their children to school well dressed appeared to rankle the parents more than any other issues. Parents felt that teachers had no understanding of what their home facilities or financial situation was like and of all expectations this was one area that they shouldn't concern themselves with. In my opinion, the teachers were more concerned with a dress code rather than suggesting that parents weren't sending their children to school well dressed. However, low income parents are very sensitive about anyone mentioning their ability to clothe and feed their children. The mere mention of someone telling them that their child is not well dressed suggests that it is a lack of caring rather than economics.

This research project aims were to examine the expectations and perceptions of the school and how parents viewed these expectations and their role. It was hoped that any findings from these observations at home and school would provide insight to parents and teachers on how to best understand the expectations of the school and how they could be made clear to parents. The idea was not to be critical of either group but to look at and observe activities in home and school that create lack of understanding of expectations or hampered an effective relationship between the two. There appear to be a lot of assumptions and ambiguities held by both groups that in some instances has hampered these understandings.

I conclude that the lack of knowledge by some teachers of home environments may create misleading and inaccurate assumptions in the minds of teachers that parents don't care because they are not involved. On the other hand, some parents have, in my opinion, been somewhat lax in trying to find out or understand teachers expectations and as a result have developed the point of view that teachers blame them for everything.

If this study holds any implications at all it would suggest continued exploration of a variety of methods of communication to make expectations known and encourage the school to expand its knowledge of the home.

This study does not pretend to be all inclusive and provide all the information about teachers expectations and parents views of their role. However, it is hoped that the information provided here will stimulate more research in this area becasue of the importance of a good home and school relationship in educating the children of this nation.

SHORTRIDGE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY:
ATTITUDES AND ADMISSION TO LITERACY

Perry Gilmore

PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION

II. CONDUCTING THE STUDY 5
  Conducting the Fieldwork 5
  Actualizing the Problem 8

III. USES OF SILENCE AND SULKING: EMOTIONAL DISPLAYS IN THE CLASSROOM 12
  Teacher Silences 13
  Student Silences
  A Question of Status and Control 36
  Sulking and Tracking 36

IV. SPELLING "MISSISSIPPI" : A LITERACY-BASED SPEECH EVENT 40
  Talkers, Tellers and Steppers 41
  Stepping and Spelling "Mississippi" 42
  The Performance: Variations on a Theme 44
  Conventionally Taught Literacy Skills 47
    Word Analysis Skills 47
    Comprehension Skills 48
    Good Citizenship Skills 49
  Gimme Room: Ownership and Personalization 50
  How Literacy-Related? 52

V. ADMISSION TO LITERACY 55
  Sulking and Stepping: The Enactment of Attitude 55
  Summary 68

I. INTROUDCTION

A major problem which administrators and teachers in the school have repeatedly voiced is that of student "attitude." A student with a "good attitude" is described in terms such as "completing homework," "being cooperative," "no discipline problems," good attendance," "being punctual," "having involved parents," "good work habits," and the like. A "good attitude," indeed, appears to be central to inclusion in the Academics Plus Program for fifth and sixth graders.*

To qualify, a student not only has to be working at a certain grade level, but also to display a "cooperative attitude." The program is in effect a tracking procedure for attitude as well as academic achievement. Teachers sometimes talk about the process as one of "weeding out bad attitudes." A student working at a relatively low grade level might be admitted to the program if his or her behavior indicated a desire to work and be cooperative. In such a case, a "good attitude" outweighs limited academic achievement. In other reported instances, a bright child who might be achieving academically, but whose behavior is characteristic of a "bad attitude," would not be admitted. In such a case, "attitude" again outweighs academic achievement.

The teachers' concern about student attitude, and the selection of students for Academic Plus, converged with another problem of special interest to me, the well-documented but poorly understood drop off in literacy rates at the transition from primary grades (1 - 3) to intermediate grades (4 - 6). Literacy acquisition appears to progress at a normal rate for all populations up to this point. At the fourth grade, many children begin to do poorly on standardized tests. Although the test scores indicate a dramatic change, little is known about the actual dynamics underlying it.

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*Due to limited space in the building, only some fourth graders were selected to continue at Shortridge in the year in which this project began. Others were sent to neighboring schools for the fifth and sixth grades. When changing numbers allowed the school to accomodate all of its fifth graders in its building, during the second year of this project, the Academics Plus program was retained. Those children who did not qualify remained in the school, but were put in a lower track. The Academics Plus Program is described by staff as a rigorous "back to basics" curriculum in which academic achievement and excellence is the primary goal.

If in fact the students selected for Academics Plus are also students who perform best in basic skills, they will most likely be students who do not drop off in literacy. There might be a connection between the dynamics of a successful transition to intermediate reading and writing skills, and the dynamics of selection for Academics Plus. Both might be aspects of a common phenomenon, which might be called 'admission to literacy And since attitude is a significant factor in selection for Academics Plus, one can ask: is there a relationship between attitude and successful literacy?

One must ask what is meant when "attitude" is referred to and evaluated. What is "attitude?" What behaviors are labelled as characteristics of "good" and "bad" attitudes?

A dictionary definition of attitude states that it is a " feeling or emotion toward a fact or state" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). The behaviorial characteristics and manifestations of an emotion state, as such, present numerous problems for observations and definition. Further, in talking to many of the staff and in the initial phases of general observation in the school and community, it became apparent that the notion of "attitude" was delicately woven into a broader context of what might be labelled "propriety". Proper standards of what is socially acceptable in conduct or speech appeared to be a consistent concern in both the community and the school. On my initial visits to the school, the neatness and the well mannered, orderly behavior of the children in halls, and classrooms were regularly pointed out and emphasized by administrators and staff. The school takes pride in being "well-run" and the parents seem to voice their approval of this image.

At times in talking about students, other descriptions were offered that seemed to parallel the use of "good" and "bad" attitude. The label "street kid" or "child of the streets" seemed to be used to describe students who were not neatly groomed, did not have "involved parents," had little supervision at home, were often absent or late, did not complete homework, and the like. These "street" kids were often the same children who were characterized as having "an attitude" or a "slight attitude." (In these cases the use of the term "attitude" alone conveys the notion of a negative or bad attitude).

On the other hand, labels like "cultured," "mature," "lady-like," "nice kid," "respectful," which seem to imply politeness and propriety, were used synonomously with "good attitude." The staff often express pride and identification when talking about the school and its students, especially the Academics Plus students, referring to "our kids" in a proud and affectionate tone. One teacher, attempting to illustrate the exceptional attitude and reputation of the students asked, "Have you seen our sixth graders (exclusively Academics Plus students)? They're cultured. They're not street kids. Have you seen the way they carry themselves?" The reference to the way students "carry themselves" suggests demeanor and propriety. (See Goffman, 1976 on the nature of deference and demeanor).

Thus, propriety - the standard of what is socially acceptable in conduct or speech - is an important theme that seemed to emerge in all aspects of the study. Further, this theme also appeared to be significant in the other research conducted at the same site, (see Anderson, Watson, and Lussier, this report). Additionally, it was identified as a salient aspect of interactions in the neighboring communities being studied on the same project (e.g. Davis, May, and Fiering, this report).

My previous experience in other school settings, as a parent, classroom teacher, and curriculum developer, suggest that this concern with 'attitude' and propriety is a significant issue in most school situations. The specific dimensions and features, and the actual meanings of "attitude" and propriety, can of course differ from one setting to another. To document them in this setting was the specific goal of my investigation. It was hoped that there might emerge a picture of what linguistic and social behaviors "count" as proper and appropriate, and of how these behaviors are affected (both in terms of their performance and their interpretation) by the different contexts in which they occur.

In pursuing this goal, I have been influenced by a growing body of literature that illustrates that students need to demonstrate "communicative competence" (Hymes 1972) or "interactional competence" (Mehan 1981) in classroom social settings in order to do well. Not only must academic knowledge be present, but the student must also know when and how to display that knowledge according to socially acceptable rules of classroom interation (see, for example , Cazden, John and Hymes, 1972; McDermott 1977; Mehan, 1979; Gilmore and Glatthorn, 1981; Heath, 1981; Edwards and Furlong, 1978; Bellack et al., 1966; etc.) Specific examples include when and how to take the floor or get a turn in classroom discussions (e.g., Shultz, Florio, Erickson, 1981; Edwards and Furlong, 1979; Bellack et al., 1966; McDermott, 1977). The moves, sequences, stages and junctures of lesson discourse (Mehan, et al. 1976; Bellack et al. 1966), participation structures (Philips, 1972), appropriate narrative styles for "sharing time" (Michaels, 1980), and the like.

The next section describes the way in which I began to investigate this area.

II. CONDUCTING THE STUDY

In this section I will present an overview of how the ethnographic research has been conducted, how the specific research foci developed from the general observations, what some of the methodological issues were, and how they were dealt with.

Conducting the Field Work

In the early stages of my fieldwork I attempted to get a general and comprehensive view of the school, the community, and the fourth grade classes I was observing. The classes were grouped homogeneously and the two classrooms I was working with were considered to fall in the middle range in terms of performance. It was likely then that some of the children in each class would be chosen for the Academic Plus class for the next year and some would not. It was therefore important for me to get to know individual children and become familiar with the full round of their activities and routines. A variety of in and out of school settings were observed in order to document the range of behaviors which were dependent on particular settings and participants. Some of the informal settings, outside the specific school domain, that afforded easy access at the initial phases of the research included girl scout meetings held in the building after school, "kiddie discos" sponsored by the home and school association (on the school premises at night), the snack shop and deli across the street from the school and the like. In the school I observed behavior not only in the classroom but also in the halls, on the playground, in the cafeteria, etc., where behavior was not organized around the completion of instructional lessons. A further effort was made to collect data in peer contexts where children had control over the organization and nature of their own interactions, outside of the supervision of adults.

It should be noted that the various settings are not necessarily a matter of physical location but can frequently be a matter of situations within a physcial setting. In other words, within a classroom where expectations are that the teacher is supervising formal learning activities, frequently interactions occur within an altogether different frame. Participation structures and roles vary within the same physical dimensions of the setting, creating altogether different kinds of interactions, organized and reorganized for different purposes. The data collection was sensitive to this notion of context.

Time was spent with teachers. The two teachers who were part of the study gave of their limited time generously and often we chatted through lunches and precious free periods when papers might have been graded. Additionally I tried to spend time with and observe some of the other teaching staff, especially those who taught the same students in special reading and math classes. The faculty lunch room and various individual teacher's rooms where staff collected to snack and chat were places where I could meet and talk to teachers and generally find out more about what was going on.

Parents were frequently in the school as volunteers and visitors. Additionally teas, book fairs, evening functions and the like afforded me relaxed opportunities to strike up casual conversation and get to know and share thoughts with many parents. Many of the teacher aides and cafeteria aides in the school were parents or relatives of students in the school and offered a unique perspective as both members of the community and members of the staff.

The corpus of data collected in a variety of settings and with a variety of participants, consisted of ethnographic field notes and, in many cases, audio tape recordings. This comprehensive type of data base provided a richly textured backdrop and large context within which any particular behaviors which surfaced for intensive sutdy could be more accurately interpretted.

In these early weeks of fieldwork the questions of my role and what might be called"level of entry" became a conscious issue. As a researcher from the university it was easy to become labelled or in some ways treated as an expert. Teachers, being open and cooperative might say "tell me what I'm doing wrong?" This posture reflects the more common reasons for teachers being observed, that is for evaluative purposes. In the case of this study and the project of which it was a part, no preconceived notions about what was "right" or "wrong" teacher or student behavior were held. (Or, more realistically, those that might have been held by the researcher were deliberately kept in check.) The aim was to learn about what was happening and how it was getting accomplished. The longer term goal was that the information generated could contribute to constructive ideas for practice, through a collaborative process between the researcher and the school people (see Hymes, this report, for further discussion).

There are various role options a researcher might assume in a study such as this one. They range from expert to lowly graduate student, from evaluator for naive questioner. As a gesture of colleagiality and cooperation an invitation to become "one of the staff" was offered by an administrator. Students sometimes asked me to identify myself and my role to them- e.g., "Are you a teacher?" "Are you studying to be a teacher?" Other times they assigned roles to me. On one ocassion, as I sat with a group at the lunch tables (where teachers did not normally sit) I folded my hands and silently "sat-up-tall", along with them as we all tried to signal our readiness to be dismissed for recess. One girl noticing me called out to the rest "Hey look. She one of us." On another occasion the same student who had identified me as "one of us", told me "We been tellin everybody you our aunt. We call you Aunt Perry". Being "one of the staff" or "one of us" or "Aunt" in these cases not only present expectations of what behavior you might display, but also expectations about the ways in which you are perceived to be aligned with others in the setting. Thus, teachers, students and parents will interact with the researcher in restricted ways that are determined by the perceived role. Subsequently there will be aspects of behavior and in turn types of data that will not be available to the researcher. As mentioned above, due to a role change, the setting itself can be modified, and it is important to be conscious of that fact.

My own procedure with regards to research was to try to maintain a flexibility of role identity. In this way I felt that I would be able to explore more fully each of the sets of knowledge available in the variety of roles, those offered naturally within the settings as well as those actively sought or constructed by me for specific purposes.

My behavior as a researcher therefore ranged in accordance with the "role of flexibility." On some occasions I was clearly a non-participant observer, sitting in the back of the room taking notes. At other times I was "one of the kids" passing and receiving"tellers", that is, notes passed surreptitiously by students to one another beyond the awareness of the teacher (a very committed and tolerant teacher I should add, to accept this behavior on my part). Or as "aunt" I watched and learned how to do "steps", a genre of street rhyme similar to parade drills and cheerleading, the performance of which was not permitted at school.

In the second academic year of the study, when the population of fourth graders moved on, they were dispersed throughout six different classrooms (three Academics Plus and three regular classes). During that time I not only observed the same children with a variety of new teachers and in different learning settings but I also took several of the children out of class and worked with them in small groups. In this final example, I assumed the role of teacher, where I was in charge of and responsible for the students.

In each of the examples offered, different aspects of behavior and different kinds and levels of information became available to me as a result of my changed role. A variety of levels and points of entry were experimented with. Informal entry such as casually dropping in to eat lunch in the cafeteria or participate in a "disco" rather than a formal introduction by the teacher provided closer alignment to the children and thus provided me with more of the child perspective and "peer culture" data I was actively seeking.

Actualizing the Problem

Hymes (1980) has emphasized that the essence of ethnographic method is in the "dialectical or feedback" aspect. This interactive-adaptive element of ethnography calls for on-going analysis of the collected data so that further data collection can be continuously and sensitively guided, informed and modified by the steadily accumulating knowledge of the researcher. Thus, by regularly reviewing field notes and transcribing and listening to tapes, research questions can be broadened and refined to more appropriately fit the context, in response to emerging patterns revealed in the preliminary analyses.

In the same paper Hymes also identifies and discusses three types of ethnography -- comprehensive, topic centered and hypothesis-oriented. The notion that is suggested is that as more is known about a culture through comprehensive ethnography, subsequent studies can focus more narrowly. Though Hymes doesn't specifically refer to a within-study movement through the three types of ethnographic research, it seems a natural process in a longitudinal investigation.

In my own study, the two principles discussed above - the three types of ethnography and the dialectical element - strongly guided the analysis. By reviewing my field notes, patterns began to emerge and questions based on those patterns could be posed. This dialectical process seemed further to progress from a general comprehensive view to a more topic-centered one.

For example, in my own preliminary classroom observations and in reviewing my field notes, I soon discovered that there were certain conventional displays of emotion that appeared regularly in my field notes and were prominent and noticeable in classroom interactions. These displays were usually non-verbal and often highly stylized performances which seemd to, in the teachers' words, convey "rebellion", "anger", and a stance of "uncooperativeness." Though I noted these displays as they occurred, my primary interest was initially with literacy-related behavior. I was almost impatient with this interference with the real business of teaching and learning in school, until I realized that if in fact these events were so frequent they were quite real aspects of classroom interaction and communication. Further, these behaviors seemed highly related to issues of attitude and classroom interactional competence.

I then focused specifically on these "displays of silence" whenever they occured in my observations. Prompted by the fact the "silent anger" was possibly related in some way to "attitude". I hoped to discover the range of dimensions of such behaviors and the role they played in classroom interactions.

At the same time that my data collection was focused on the topic of these silent displays I continued to keep a comprehensive record of the full round of behavior in the two classrooms. In this way context was continually documented and other salient aspects of ineractions were not obscured.

Cook-Gumperz et al (197) have noted that in addition to documenting the nature of the setting and the general daily organization of activity, "key episodes" are identified and selected as they shed light on theoretical questions being investigated. For example, "sharing time "in classrooms offered useful data for highlighting issues of appropriate narrative style for literacy acquisition. In my preliminary work investigating the communication and interpretation of "attitude" and what it might have to do with the acquisition of literacy at school, I was stimulated by the notion of "paradoxes of communication" (Bateson 1972). I began to look at how notions of context, frame and transformations influence an understanding of what "counts" as appropriate communicative behavior in and out of school.

Rather than find "key episodes" in daily formal lesson activity such as "sharing time", reading circle and the like, the nature of my investigation of attitude and propriety in general led my data collection to focus on related behavioral events which occurred regularly but not at designated times. Two "key behaviors" seemed to crystalize as contrastive and complimentary aspects of the enactment of "attitude".

The examples of silence and displays of emotion given above were behaviors that were identified as important. In reviewing my field notes the teachers were able to identify these silent clashes of will as problematic, painful and linked to the question of "attitude".

The second "key behavior" which became a topic of focus in my study was the performance "doin steps." As mentioned earlier "steps" are a genre of street rhyme which seem to grow out of the tradition of "drilling" that is, drill team parade practice. "Steps" involve chorally chanted rhymes punctuated with foot steps and hand claps which set up a background rythym. Though I became interested in the activity originally for other reasons which will be discussed in a later section, the insights this behavior might provide in trying to understand what counts as appropriate became all too apparent when its performance was banned from the school - a decision that seemed generally agreed upon by administrators, teachers, parents and in certain ways even the children who performed it.

Thus the general question of whether or not there is any relationship between propriety and the acquisition of literacy, focused attention on what linguistic and social behaviors actually count as appropriate. The two key events that emerge as significant provide fertile ground for careful analysis of the enactment of proper "attitude". Both "silence displays" and "doing steps" stood out prominently in the data, almost inviting further attention and analysis. In much the same way they stood out as behaviors that were readily noticed, controversial and problematic for the teachers at school. Both key behaviors counted as inappropriate. Both were performances that stood out and received attention from the staff.

Yet the two performances were a dramatic contrast to one another in almost every other way. Though both were communicative events the nature of their performances differed on all levels, including participants, settings, key, mode, audience, channel, etc. One was silent, the other verbal. One was an individual performance done by both sexes. The other was performed in all-girl groups. One was performed largely in formal school contexts where an adult authority was in control. The other was performed in informal peer contexts - on the playground, and at home in driveways, on steps, and the like. And so on.

Due to the rather striking nature of the contrast of these behaviors, an extensive examination of each of them promised to offer a complementary view of the question of propriety and the enactment of attitude. Because they differed in so many of the elements of communicative performance, their juxtaposition could provide a fuller range of behavior,through an examination of which a better understanding of propriety might emerge.

Further, both communicative events provided concrete and specific aspects of behavior that could be analyzed in terms of their relatedness to literacy. In other words, it would be an abstract and vague problem to try to see a relationship between propriety and literacy, but by actualizing propriety in the form of observable communicative behavioral events, social and linguistic behaviors associated with propriety could be specifically examined and related to specific literacy behaviors.

In the following two sections details of the analysis and finding concerning the two key events will be presented and discussed. The way in which these behaviors can inform us about the relationship between attitude, propriety and literacy acquisition will be considered.

III. USES OF SILENCE AND SULKING: EMOTIONAL DISPLAYS IN THE CLASSROOM

Silence and sulking may seem tangential to language and literacy, but they are vital to the dynamics of student success in school. Classrooms are often the scenes of clashes of will. The ways in which these confrontations are treated by teachers and students will strongly affect any literacy learning that takes place. Student behavior that might be appropriate in a community setting may result in the student being perceived in the classroom as misbehaving or uncooperative. Situations, moreover, may carry with them a sense of what feelings are appropriate to have. Hochschild, discussing what she calls "emotion work", that is, "the act of evoking or shaping as well as suppressing feeling in oneself" (1979:552). Hochschild (1979) suggests that there are "feeling rules" which are learned and used as baselines in social exchanges. Such "feeling rules" seem to be articulated frequently in classrooms. Consider this excerpt from my field notes:

> There is loud chatting and calling out and several students are out of their seats while the teacher is trying to explain how to do the assignment. The teacher suddenly shouts in a loud and angry voice, "Sit down, sit up... (more softly) and don't look surprised or hurt cause we've gone over this before."

The teacher first gives an emotional display of anger shouting at the class to sit down and sit up (i.e., get in your seats and sit tall at attention). When several students display looks of "hurt" or "surprise", she tells them that it is not acceptable to feel or, more accurately to look as if they feel that way. In this particular instance the teacher may have been mediating her own display by telling the class that it wasn't a serious enough emotion to be hurt by. The teacher reminds them that they know the rules they were breaking (e.g., calling out, walking around the room while she was talking to them as a class, side-chatting loudly). This reminder is conveyed in the phrase "we've gone over this before." Therefore she is able to justify her own angry response while instructing the class about the appropriate emotional response she expects them to have and display.

Silence and non-verbal communicative displays are important in this context because much of student emotional communications must take place without talk. The classrooms that I observed at Shortridge are no exception to the generalization that most of the talk is by teacher (Anderson 1977), and that 'children's time is spent overwhelmingly in listening and reading' (Cazden 1980).

Non-verbal behaviors were indeed frequent during my observations of children and I began to look specifically for emotional displays. I soon discovered that teachers also use somewhat similar displays of silence and therefore, not only student displays but also teachers' responses to student displays, and teacher displays themselves.

My focus has been on silences and the boundaries of silence in face-to-face interactions other than pauses for thought, not for example the silence which may occur while doing independent assigned seatwork such as reading or writing exercises. I will attempt to compare and contrast the ways in which teachers and students use, understand and respond to each other's interactional silences. Additionally, an attempt will be made to describe how these student and teacher behaviors fit into the larger context of silence in the school as a whole, and what insight they might provide in understanding the relationship between propriety and literacy.

Teacher Silences

Here is one observation:

Field Notes
Excerpt A

> The class has returned from lunch. The teacher has led them in two lines, boys and girls, up the stairs from the cafeteria to the classroom. Once in the room students get seated, chat, go to the water fountain, and the like. There is considerable movement and noise in the room. The teacher stands in the front of the room holding the book Sounder, her finger separating the pages along with the book marker. On the board the schedule is listed in chalk: Sounder, Abraham Lincoln, Language Arts, etc.

Teacher: When I see...when I see every mouth stopped and everybody turned around to me, I'll know we're ready to start our schedule.

((Teacher stands silently staring around the room))

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.
.

((Students continue to chat and move around the room))

.
.
.

Maria is ready.

.
.
.

I'm not gonna wait forever until I start putting names up there.*

.
.
.

((Students are quiet and the teacher begins to ask review questions about the book they read yesterday.))

(*Names are put on the board for good and bad behavior and are rewarded or punished accordingly.)

The teacher begins to read from the book in an animated and involved tone. Occasionally she stops reading, sometimes in the middle of a sentence, and looks up silently to some individual student who's been side chatting. Once the student is quiet again she continues to read. Several students are talking in small clusters around the room. The teacher stands and walks near two students who've been playing with rulers, having a small duel under their desks. The teacher takes the rulers from them as she continues reading from Sounder. The teacher sits in front of the room again reading, punctuating her performance with questions about characters, feelings, vocabulary words, and the like. The class gets noisy again.

Teacher: ((Puts book down to her lap and then stands silently.))

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.
.

All right. I'll wait again.

.
.
.

((Teacher stands silent. When class is quiet she sits and softly begins reading again.))

The example illustrates the uses a classroom teacher may make of silence as a display which is mutually understood by all participants in the scene and can (and does) affect behavior.

A closer examination of some of the features of teacher silence may be useful at this point. Silence displays are often marked with shift in body orientation such as looking up from a book, standing up, turning to or walking near an individual who is "breaking a rule." Teachers will sometimes give a scolding look or shake their head "no" during the silence. When extremely frustrated, the silence may be accompanied by a tightly gritted jaw or blushing. In all cases I've observed, the teachers wear a serious facial expression. The display has never appeared accompanied by a smile. Sometimes in fact an abrupt change in facial expression from smile to stern seriousness will mark the silence display. For example, I observed a teacher chatting in a smiling and relaxed easy with her students as they were lining up on the playground after recess. Abruptly as if suddenly changing a dramatic theater mask, the teacher looked out over the lines wearing an angry warning look. The quickness of the change, with no apparent cause provoked by the students, suggests that the change in facial expression was not so much a change in the teacher's emotional state as a change in the message she was trying to convey, that is, now it was time to get quiet and orderly. It would probably be realistic to assume that almost anyone who has been a classroom teacher or parent can recall at one time or another using this type of communicative display to convey a non-verbal message.

In addition to body idiom and facial expression, another physical characteristic of the use of a silence display is the manipulation of and use of physical gestures that mark the display. I have observed teachers turn out the lights or write a name on the board during the silence. An interesting fact about silence as a conventional communicative signal is that it runs a high risk of going unnoticed, expecially in the circumstances in which teachers frequently use it (i.e., when classes are noisy).

Not surprisingly, silences are often marked not only with gestures, body orientation and the like, but with signals that actually carry sound. Often teachers will initiate a silence display by slamming a door (in some cases even opening the door first in order to do so), slapping a book down on the desk, or clapping their hands. Teachers often keep props for this purpose. One teacher I observed kept a wooden club on her desk which she would bang. Bells and whistles are often used (I had an elephant ring whistle when I taught third grade). Verbal markers (from shouts to silent whispers) are also effective in drawing attention to silence. Examples of such verbal markers include: "I'm waiting", "I've had it!", "Johnie knows why I'm standing here.", "I've had it for the day. We're just going to sit.", "uh oh (standing with hands on hips)", "okay", "We're not ready.", "Brian..I need your attention.", "Freeze", et al. Several such verbal markets are illustrated in the sample protocol above (e.g., "Margo is ready.", "I'm not going to wait..."). Sighs are also used as aural signals along with silence.

The display appears to carry a mutually understood meaning for all classroom participants. It seems to mean "pay attention to me" and/or "what you're doing is not acceptable to me." The appropriate student response is silence and attention. Usually the display is most effective as a transition device, a way to get attention and class cohesion for a new lesson or activity, marking the beginning of a new frame. It is very frequently used at these "junctures" (Mehan, 1975). The other most obvious use is for maintaining an orderly interaction. Consider the following example.

Field Notes
Excerpt B

During the math lesson the teacher has asked a question and about six different students call our answers without being called on.

Teacher: (angry tone) I'm done, I'm done.

((She slams her book down.))

Now we'll sit. This is our valentine time.*
I am DONE.

.
.
.

((Teacher and class are silent.))

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.
.

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*The teacher refers to the planned activity of making valentine cards. By losing lesson time they will be losing time at making the valentines.

(in a very soft and quiet but firm tone) We will answer one at a time and we'll answer by raising our hands. If you're not answering a question be listening.

.

.

.

(Softly, almost inaudibly, teacher resumes math lesson.)

As shown in this example, silence can be used not only to initiate but also to regain and maintain the orderliness of the lesson structure. It would be hard to imagine the directions to raise hands and answer in turn having the same dramatic effect without the use of silence to convey strong disapproval.

Teacher silences and regulation of volume in general seem to facilitate the pacing and cadence of classroom interactional rhythms. They are dramatic devices by which a teacher, as the pivotal person in a traditional classroom, can actually freeze a frame, keep the class hanging, so to speak, by silently waiting. In this way teachers may play with and elongate a naturally permitted silence in order to convey a message about appropriate student behavior. Teachers might refer to "the stare" or suggest that giving someone "the eye" will serve as an effective reprimand. Indeed these silent "looks" are effective controlling devices, especially if they have interrupted a normal stream of talk. In sum, then, by withholding their turn at talk, while simultaneously maintaining the conversational floor, teachers exercise strong control of the interaction.

The length of time the teacher keeps the silence varies considerably from a brief pause in a sentence to a prolonged period of five to ten minutes or more. At times the silence will be ended as soon as the desired attention is gotten. On other occasions the silence will continue conspicously after the class's silence is accomplished, thus prolonging the message and probably also prolonging the mood.

Silences as a means of "keeping control" are frequently recomended to novice teachers, both in training institutions, staff development seminars and in the nature of helpful hints passed on from Veteran teachers in informal faculty dining room and hallway chats. The trick in using silence, as once explained to me in my first year as an elementary school teacher, is that it will provide the same desired response - quiet and attention - as a loud verbal message, but it will not tend to escalate the noise level the way a loud scolding might. What frequently happens in classrooms is that as the students get noisy, teachers try to "talk over" the noise, a response which tends to increase the volume of the student noise, and in turn again the teacher's loudness of voice level. Speaking softly and using silence as an attention getter seems to moderate the volume.

Teachers have also commented that silence and waiting are a good way to "fight" the pressure and the fast pace of the classroom, and effective device to "slow down the activity", a way to "interrupt" or "stop the pressure", "a relief", "a way of withdrawing and regaining focus" for all participants. This is probably true especially of long silences produced and prolonged by strong disapproval, frustration and a sense of loss of control.

The impression given in these "tips of the trade" is that silence is considered a controlled and peaceful kind of disciplinary model. While true in some cases, there are also vivid examples of silence addressing highly charged emotional interactions.

Student Silences

Unlike the teacher silence which has only one audience, the students, student silence can be a communicative device directed at fellow students as well as the teacher. The primary concern in this discussion is to examine silence as a way of displaying emotion, but brief mention of the other uses of ineractional silence should be made. In traditional classes of 25-30 students, where discourse usually takes the form of two interlocutors engaged face-to-face - one, the teacher, the other, 25 students who must behave as one speaker, it is not surprising that much of the student silence is cooperative and in the role of listenenr. Ranging from attentively being involved in the focused activity to disguising silently side activities such as reading under the desk, note passing and the like. Much of the silence of students falls into this category. This listener silence "fits in" the participation structure of the situation and is in fact where most students hide during the major part of the school day. This type of hiding is so effective that a teacher or indeed a classroom researcher may have to make strong effort if these students are to be noticed. Except for occasional short answers, the primary role of these invisible students is to facilitate the discourse by remaining silent. Many teachers are reminded of the number of students they "don't know" when called upon to sum up a child's progress for a report card or a parent conference.

The student silences that are most visible occur in teacher-student confrontations. Usually these encounters are ones in which the student is being reprimanded, they often take place in front of other class members. In these cases I have observed two kinds of silence displays, which can be called submissive subordinate and non-submissive subordinate. The first, submissive subordinate, is only observed with interactions with the teacher or other adult authority, never with peers. This display is marked with body gestures such as a bowed head, quizzical expression around the eyes, a smile (even a giggle if the offense is not too serious), a serious but relaxed facial expression, etc. Consider the example below.

Field Notes
Excerpt C

> Johnny plays with his hat. The teacher interupts the lesson and tells him to stop playing with his hat. Johnny looks down, bowing his head breifly, then looks up at the teacher, he eyes raise first then his head follows. His eyebrows curl questioningly and he smiles a rather tentative but affectionate smile. The teacher continues speaking and as she verbally threatens that he might stay after school the smile disappears quickly from his face during her utterance.

By contrast, the non-submissive subordinate display of silence carries with it a very different body idiom. The protocol below will illustrate the difference.

Field Notes
Excerpt D

Ann has been kept after school along with several others. Each student is being called to the teacher's desk individually to discuss what they did wrong that day. Ann is called to the teacher's desk as Wendy, Andrea's friend, is dismissed. Andrea stands at the desk with her chin up, her face tight and fixed, her eyelids closed for elongated periods and her gaze shifts mostly downward to a side glance, only briefly and rarely looking to the teacher. Andrea taps her foot as she stands silent and distant.

Teacher: When you stop tapping your toe and looking like that, I'll talk to you.

((Ann is silent. Her mouth is set tightly and her lids are lowered and taut - "mean eyes"- she continues to tap her foot.))

.

.

.

The teacher asks her why she's here and with no change in affect she answer cryptically that she was "yellin in the hall."

Teacher: You're angry?

Ann: Yeah.

Teacher: (inaud.)...let people know you're angry without being nasty, tapping your toe, calling people names...

.

.

.

((Ann unchanged remains silent.))

.

.

.

Teacher: You're tapping your finger too - I can see you're still angry...come on (almost pleading tone)

.

.

.

((Ann same.))

.

.

.

Teacher makes several other attempts (including a reminder that she's keeping her friend Willa waiting - and Wendy is sick), but Ann remains silent and retains her body idiom with no sign or leak. Teacher says, if she would like to sit down and think about it. Ann says "yeah" and leaves the teacher's desk.

Ann gets a drink, chats with her friend Willa, while teacher talks to John.

After a few minutes pass Ann walks passed the teacher's desk to get a handout they were to take home.

Teacher: (smiling) Oh, you lost it already.

Ann: (smiles) Yes.

((Teacher hands Ann the folder containing the handout.))

Ann and Wendy are chatting. Ann is smiling. Both girls stand near the teacher's desk and all talk and laugh, kidding with Ben, Garry, and John about "boyfriends."

Teacher: (to Ann) Your whole body and face are different now...

> Teacher continues to comment on her affect change and asks again what was going on before. Now Ann goes into a fluent narrative about her argument with Sam. The teacher responds saying "but that doesn't tell me about all this other stuff...tapping you toe..."
>
> They continue to talk briefly then the teacher asks if she will try to behave tomorrow. Ann mumbles "yeah" and the teacher smiles saying, "Can you say it differently?" Ann smiles and says "Yes, Miss_____", as she turns to leave.

The example above demonstrates some of the power and control that can be exercised by a student with a silent display of emotions. It appears to be an effective face-saving device for one who must be submissive. The body idiom is easily noted, as the teacher's detailed comments above illustrate, but very difficult to modify in a face-to-face encounter.

As mentioned earlier, the performance of this display is often highly stylized and differs for boys and girls. Girls will frequently pose with their chins up, closing their eye lids for elongated periods and casting downward side glances, and often markedly turning their heads sidewards as well as upwards. Girls also will rest their chins on their hand with elbow support on their desks. Striking the pose, or getting into the pose is usually with an abrupt movement that will sometimes be marked with a sound like the elbow striking the desk or a verbal marker like "humpf." Again as with the teacher silence, it is necessary to draw some attention to the silence and with the girls it seems to be primarily with a flourish of getting into the pose.

Boys usually display somewhat differently. Their "sulking" is usually characterized by head downward, arms crossed at the chest, legs spread wide and usually desk pushed away. Often they will mark the silence by knocking over a chair or pushing loudly on their desk, assuring that others hear and see the performance.. Another noticeable characteristic of the boys' performance is that they sit down, deeply slumped in their chairs. This is a clear violation of the constant reminder in classrooms to "sit up" and "sit up tall." Teachers will often talk about "working on" sitting up, feet under the desk, lining up, et al. The silence displays go against all the body idiom rules of the classroom. Even when less extreme postures are taken, however the facial expression remains an easily read signal of emotion.

For both boys and girls, "getting into the sulk" does not seem to be verbally marked the way that teachers' silences are. Getting out of a sulk presents certain challenges to boys and girls alike however. I have observed several instances where it might be valid to say that someone got "stuck in a sulk." The following event illustrates such a situation.

Field Notes
Excerpt E

> Teacher has dismissed the class for lunch. Darnel and Robert remain behind. Their names had been put on the board becuase they were misbehaving - arguing and hitting each other. The teacher walks over to Darnel and leaning her hands on the desk and on the back of Darnel's chair she bends down slightly and speaks softly to her. Teacher asks about what happened between them and Darnel answers in a tense and quick tone that Robert hit her first and she hit him back. Darnel's face is tight as she speaks and she side glances to Robert then closes her eyes and looks back to the teacher then down to the floor.
>
> The teacher responds in a soft voice that there are other ways to have responded. "When he hits you, say something...ignore him." Darnell sits up abruptly and responds "He called me a gorilla face. I said if you see one...slap one." Robert, sitting a few seats away, turns to her calling, I'didn't call you..." Darnel shouts "yes you did.""The teacher steps in and stops the exchange, "Okay that's enough." After a brief silence the teacher says "Looks to me like you two are still angry." Teacher tells Robert to go sit over next to Darnel. As Robert stands and is escorted by the teacher to a chair next to Darnel, the teacher tells them both that they should "talk to each other" explaining that they "work together in a classroom."

Robert sits hard into the chair and slumps down with legs extended and arms crossed at his chest. HIs face is set hard and he stares down at the floor silently. Darnel, too, stares down at the floor with her cheeks sucked in a bit and her lips pushed out in a pout. They both hold their silence.

The teacher goes around the room marking work that the class left out on their desks. Robert and Darnel continue to hold their silence as well as their body idiom. Ten minutes of the lunch period have passed. Darnel takes a small box from inside her desk and holds it in her lap fingering the decorations on it.

The teacher walks over to them after a few more silent moments pass. "Isn't there anything you want to say?" Both students look at the floor silently. Both wear pouting scowling expressions on their faces. The teacher takes the box from Darnel and puts it back into the desk. The teacher continues to talk to them, trying to persuade them to talk to each other, express their feelings verbally. "There are ways of telling someone you're angry without pushing, shoving..." Darnel responds in a defensive quick tone, "He hit me in my sore eye." The teacher tells Darnel to tell him that. Darnel resumes her pose looking down at the floor silently. The teacher say to Robert leaning over Darnel, "When you hit her in her sore eye it made her furious." The teacher comments that they are missing lunch,"don't you want to tell her something?" Both children are silent.

Time passes. The teacher marks papers. The two students sit silent. Darnel takes the box from her desk and fingers it in her lap.

The teacher is marking Robert's paper. "Robert would you come here a minute?" Her comment briefly shifts the scene and Robert walks over to her and they go over his paper as she points out his handwriting is confusing. She asks "What kind of a steak was it?" Robert is silent and his face is tight and angry. The teacher talks quietly looking at his paper and not looking up at his face. She explains that he wrote beefsteak as feel and feet steak. He responds quietly (inaudible to me) and his face softens. As Robert walks back to his "seat" (the one assigned to him in order to talk with Darnel) the teacher asks "Now is there anything you want to say to Darnel?" Robert does not respond. He sits down and Darnel sits quietly fingering the box. The teacher addresses Darnel "I told you to put that box away." Then to Robert the teacher adds, "Why don't you tell her you're gonna stay away from her and she better stay away from you."

Robert and Darnel sit silent. Both wear scowling expressions on their faces. More time passes.

The teacher who is again marking papers says "Okay. Go to lunch. There are five minutes left. Don't sit near each other."

A head on confrontation by the teacher to a sulker in a sulk does not seem to work to modify either the body idiom of the mood. The sulkers win the bout in this episode. It appears that the sulk only melts when the teacher changes the frame by shifting attention and releasing the performer, as in Excerpt D, when Ann was allowed to go away from the teacher's desk, when Robert began to talk about his paper, or by the teacher or student actually leaving the room. To confront a sulk seems to be(in certain professions which deal with adult sulkers) a known taboo, a no-win siutation. One way teachers deal but don't deal with this type of display is to send the offender to the principal's office.

In an interview with one teacher an interesting alternative device for confronting the "sulk" was offered. When asked what she would do with this type of display by a student, she performed a very touching counter display. She said she'd touch the child's cheeks and cup his face in her hands and with her face close to the child she'd smile lovingly, and tenderly say "I like you so much when you smile." Her love display filled me with emotion enough to think she actually might be able to melt a sulk with her wamth, and her soft palms on a tense cheek.

I have observed affection and humor change a frame and melt a sulk even when it is an intense and prolonged one, as in the next example.

Field Notes
Excerpt F

The class is doing reading work independently, answering questions written on the board about the story in their basal reader. Towanda the new girl in the class, sits next to Willa. They chat both about what the assignment is and how it is to be done and also about things unrelated to their assigned task as they get to know each other. The conversation glides in and out of the topics.

As the class works on the reading assignment, several children are selected (those who were working well was the basis for selection) for a special activity. These children sit at the small art table and are painting the puppet heads they have made. Directions for this activity were given by the teacher to the whole class so that as the individuals were selected they all would know what to do. The procedure was to have been to paint the entire head first and then when the paint dried paint the features. John has begun painting and is painting the features rather than the entire head first. Willa and Towanda are seated close to the painting table. Willa comment Then Wendy calls out "Miss _____, didn't you say paint it brown first?" The teacher looks at Wendy with a scolding, harsh expression. (The teacher says nothing but the message of silence seems to be a negative sanction of Wendy's tattling.) As Willa looks away from the teacher she makes an angry face and glares up at the teacher briefly. Then Willa continues her reading work and her chatting with Towanda.

Time passes and the teacher goes around the room checking sutdents reading work. When she comes to Wilma and Towanda she sees that they have done very little. She tells them both they will have to stay after school because they didn't do their work. The girls say nothing but as the teacher continues to talk to them she begins to modify her stance as if realizing that Willa might have been helping Towanda and therefore have taken longer to do the work. She asks if Wilma was helping and Willa says she was. The teacher responds that she appreciates Willa's helping Towanda and realizes that that's what slowed them down. The teacher, however, does not say that they do not have to stay after school. The teacher moves on to the others continuing to check reading work. Time passes and the activity changes. The class plays two games before going on to the next formal class lesson which is math. At the juncture between the last game and the beginning of the math lesson there is a good deal of movement around the room. Wilma walks up to the teacher and asks if she can go to the bathroom.* The teacher tells her no. Willa returns to her seat and sits sulking. She slumps in her chair which she pushes away from her desk and crosses her arms at her chest. She intermittently gives harsh stares up at the teacher, then holds her head down to make a sulking face. when I looked up from my notes Willa was no longer sulking but chatting with Margo and smelling the paint on the puppet head Margo is working on.

The math lesson is underway and Willa answers the teacher's question ("One third.") correctly - but wears a mad face when doing so, looking at the teacher when giving her response. Immediately after she answer she slumps forward on her desk, rolls her eyes and leans her head on her hand.

(Willa seemed to be reminded that she was angry when she shifted back from chatting to being a part of the lesson.)

*It should be noted that in most cases teachers have a sixth sense about bathroom requests much like mothers who can distinguish serious cries from their babies. The reader should keep that in mind while reading this protocol.

The math lesson continues and Willa gets up from her seat and walks up to the teacher during the lesson asking softly if she can go to the bathroom. The teacher says that she just went before. Willa returns toher seat and sulks, making faces and staring side glances at the teacher. Then she buries her head down on her desk nuzzled in the bends of her elbow and walled off by her arms folded around her face. The teacher does not respond or appear to notice but continues with the lesson. Towanda sits holding her work posture (sitting tall with pencil poised on paper on her desk) while with her free hand she pats and strokes Willa's arms. Willa looks up to the teacher and moves her mouth shaping silent words while giving "mean eyes". Then she puts her head back into her arms and Towanda continues to stroke her.

As math cards are being passed around and the activity within the lesson shifts, Willa sits up. She turns in her chair slightly oriented away from the teacher in front of the room and puts her fingers in her ears while making "tsk" sounds and shifting her head and rolling her eyes. Willa then leans forward looking at Towanda's paper and at the teacher who continues the math lesson. Willa then abruptly smacks her hands down and sits up, holds her pencil up and looks as though she is "in" the lesson activity. This lasts only briefly however when she begins to tap her feet and look away from the teacher. She then puts her pencil down and again lies down on her desk with her face hidden.

The lesson goes on and Willa remains "out". Willa looks up briefly and breaks her sulk only when her whole row gets involved on looking at the completed puppet heads the art table has been working on. She returns to her hidden position.

The teacher walks around the room checking the students' math work. She sees Willa's paper with no work on it and Willa with her head down on her desk. The teacher speaks softly to her "What happened this afternoon...I'll...you got confused?..." Teacher touches Willa's head with gentle strokes. Willa remains with her head buried and mumble a response that is inaudible to me. The teacher quietly says in a gentle tone "I'll see you after school." then walks on. When the teacher leaves Willa sits up and begins her math. Willa finishes very quickly and while the teacher is at the art table looking at the puppets Willa approaches her holding her math paper saying "I'm finished Miss ____." The teacher is engaged with the others and does not respond. Willa sits down.

The teacher begins a new activity at the board as the class tries to come up with a list of prepositions. Willa raises her hand and appears to be in the lesson but when called on she silently mouths to the teacher "I have to go to the bathroom." Teacher calls on another without responding to Willa. Willa puts her hand up again and then turns abruptly away from the teacher and focus of activity. Teacher looks at Willa and with her lips together she shakes her head "no" to Willa with a slight smile and her finger held up near her mouth so as to say "sh".

The class is getting ready for dismissal and Willa sits up tall with her hands folded to show she's ready to be called on to leave. Towanda tells Willa "We can't leave" knowing the teacher had told them they had to stay after school. Willa rolls her eyes and says "I can too leave." Willa puts her hand up and looks to the teacher calling out "I gotta go to the bathroom." Willa walks over to the teacher and repeats "I gotta go to the bathroom." The teacher tells her to sit down. Willa sits making sulking faces saying to Towanda "I hate her...she can't make me to nothin." Then in response to the phone Willa says to herself looking at the teacher "your stupid phone's ringing."

The teacher dismisses many of the students and chats with those remaining as students move around the room doing final chores and getting their coats etc., as some of the boys are helping

> put up the chairs. Willa says "I'm goin home" and gets her coat. Putting it on she says " I'm leavin." Towanda remains seated and the teacher has not appeared to take notice of Willa's actions. One student asks if anybody fed the fish and Willa says "no that why they starvin. I hope they die. I'm leavin."
>
> The teacher is talking to Rodney about his work and all the rest of the class has gone except for those who were told they had to stay after school. Willa and Towanda chat as they sit waiting for the teacher's attention.
>
> The teacher sitting on Rodney's desk calls Willa up to her. Several other students are standing near the teacher also. Willa approaches sulking. The teacher in a light tone smilingly says "What's the face? " and continues asking "What happened in math?" Then the teacher pulls Willa close and affectionately touches, smiles and jokes with her saying in a friendly teasing key "..ya put your head down and put your lips out at me.." She continues to talk and hold Willa and Willa begins to smile and laugh and answers in a friendly tone.
>
> All the students leave in a happy mood.

Though Willa had managed to maintain her state of sulk through three different lessons on and off, and feed it with new stimuli as time passed (altogether close to one hour), it was only finally ended when the teacher smiled and affectionately held and teased her.

Another interesting aspect of the example above is Towanda's response to Willa's mood. Towanda's affectionate stroking of Willa cannot break the sulk as did the teacher's affection. The sulk is directed at the teacher and it is she who must respond to it. Towanda's response suggests also that she view Willa's situation sympathetically and "approves" of Willa feeling the way she does. Consider the peer reaction to Rodney's sulking as a contrasting judgement of a student emotional display in the next example.

Field Notes
Excerpt G

> Rodney has been having trouble with his math worksheet. He has been out in the hall working on his paper. He enters the room with an extreme scowl on his face. His eyes are tight and "mean" and his lower lip protrudes noticeably. First he walks to his desk and then after pausing there briefly he slowly approaches the teacher who is seated with Jonny and Robert, helping them with math. Rodney's face is extreme in its expression - his lips could hardly be out further nor his brows more taut. Rodney puts his paper on the desk in front of his teacher. Johnny and Robert look at Rodney and begin to laugh and point at his face. Rodney almost loses his expression briefly - as if to start to giggle - but then tightens the look making his lip protrude even further.
>
> The teacher ignores the laughter. She tells Rodney that she's told him before "that's why he's in school"..to "learn" and "it's nothing to be mad about." When Rodney tightens his facial expression in response to his peers' laughter, the teacher tells him to sit down. As Rodney walks to his seat the teacher says "When you get that look off your face - I'll come help you. I'm not gonna help you when you look like that."
>
> Jenny and Robert find Rodney's display inappropriate and their giggling is a negative judgement. It does not ultimately change Rodney's behavior, however, although it does make him briefly self-conscious enough to modify his expressions a bit.

A final example shows another reaction to a third party by someone in a sulk. onsider the following excerpt.

Field Notes
Excerpt H

The teacher calls on individuals for oral reading in an entire class activity. Nine children have had turns. As each child finishes reading and the next turn is left open, most of the others raise their hands to be called on. At one of these pauses between turns Towanda, one of the five new students who have just moved to the class, raises her hand again as she has for the last several times. While her hand is up for a turn the Teacher calls on another saying, "Go on Tanika." Towanda lowers her hand and makes a sulking face at the teacher. As her head lowers to look down at the passage in her book her eyes follow the same path at a slight delay , lingering first in a "mean" stare at the teacher. When her eyes meet mine accidently in their path to the print on her desk her face is in a tight sulk still expressing her disapproval of not getting a turn. Towanda is new to the class and does not know me at this time. I'm not sure she has any idea about who I am or what I'm doing in the class. When our eyes meet, I'm not sure who did it first or whether it was simultaneous, but we both smiled. I may have done it first to let her know she had not been "caught" being disrespectful by someone who would then judge or punish her. She might have smiled in response or initiated the smile to show that it wasn't a serious or lasting non-verbal statement. She may have also smiled simply because it seemed she was "caught" - a slight shoulder shrug accompanying the smile suggested that reaction.

Towanda demonstrates her own ability to instantaneously swith her emotional display and indicates a kind of meta-awareness of what kinds of deliberate control she can exercise over this type of communication of gestural expressive emotion.

This is similar to the quick change in facial expression on the part of the teacher getting lines organized on the playground.

One student, observed sulking on several occasions, has shown his own ambivalence about his wanting to hold the posture by actually resting his head on the teacher's arm or shoulder while still in an angry sulking position.

How do students use the sulk? What functions does it seem to perform? One of the major results of the silent display is that it clearly gets attention. Although teachers refer to it differently as pouting, fretting, acting spoiled, rebellious, acting nasty, having a temper tantrum, et al., all notice it and usually respond. Often the student benefits. Consider the following example.

Field Notes
Exceprt I

> The teacher has put one boy's name on the board. He sits deep in his chair, arms crossed at his chest looking down. The teacher dismisses the class to go take the CAT Math test in the library. She tells the sulking boy that she's not going to make him take the test "cause you're too upset." He maintains his pose until she goes to work with a new girl also not taking the test. While the teacher works across the room with the other child, the boy drops the body idom, sits up and close to his desk and begins to read.

Students often get in trouble in classrooms for fighting with each other. I have observed several silent devices for avoiding confrontation. If a student has been in an argument with another student, for example, getting into a sulk that attracts the teacher's attention will often result in the teacher moving the other's desk or sending him/her out of the room or the like. Sulking among peers is rare and short-lived. In these cases of peer-peer sulking, the audience appears to be the adult in control.

The student silent display seem then to have the same mutually acknowledged meaning for participants as did the teacher display - "pay attention to me" and/or "what you're doing is not acceptable to me." In many of the observed instances of its use the communicative device seems to work. It appears to be a highly risky device, however, for though there may be some immediate rewards, children who use it too often and inappropriately get labelled as having "bad attitudes".

Sulking itself, however, is not uniformly treated not uniformly performed. Some children seem to have perfected this type of display routine in a very highly stylized way, so much so that one suspects it was learned early and used frequently in the home. Simarlarly, in observations of language acquisition in poor working class families, Peggy Miller (personal communication) found that mothers would tell their babies (under two years old) to make "mean eyes" as part of a communicative routine. In the Black community in which this study is being conducted, expressed norms of appropriate interactional demeanor include "looking ready to fight" (Davis, 1980) and "not taking shit" (May, 1980).

The stylized sulking could be interpretted as one behavioral element of a "tough" demeanor, yet how sulking behavior gets interpretted appears to be highly dependent on contextualization cues. One child's sulk is read as "anger and hostility", while another, appearing to display the same or very similar physical characteristics, is merely "needing attention". In the example above (Excerpt F) Willa's lengthy and dramatic performance of silent sulking was not viewed by her teacher as anger but as "dramatic" and "needing attention". Ann's behavior in Excerpt D, however, was interpretted as hostile and angry. In fact her teacher remarked, when reading over my field notes for the event, "Ihave trouble dealing with anger." As it happens, when this event took place, Ann and the teacher had been in the middle of a two week long conflict that had involved several discussions with Ann's mother about her behavior. Thus very similar behaviors are interpretted in very different ways. In Willa's case the behavior can be glossed as style and in Ann's case, "bad attitude".

In a similar fashion, there are teachers who appear to play with stern face silent stares and looks, as a dramatic performance. One student commenting on such an individual said, "At first I thought she was real mean till I realized she was just follin' around. She has a good sense of humor." I had an opportunity to visit this particular teacher's class on the day when parents were invited to come in and take the place of their children as students for the day. It was most comic to see her perform both verbal and non-verbal means of strict control. Silent looks of disapproval seemed humorously inappropriate when directed at a class full of adults. Not only was it clear that it was playful, but the parents cooperative engagement in the game sanctioned the appropriateness of it in their view as a means of control for their children.

In sum, it appears that student sulking can be interpretted positively or negatively depending on when and how the display is performed in a particular context. Certain children can signal the message "this is play" (Bateson,), but for the most part it is a behavior that carries the image of incorrect deference and demeanor and is usually interpretted as indicative of a "bad attitude".

A Question of Status and Control

The analysis indicates that due to the different statuses of students and teachers, their silences are performed in situations and with styles that reflect their dominant and subordinate role, although the uses and meaning of their silences are actually very similar.

In both cases, submissive and non-submissive, the student silences are clearly subordinate. Among peers the display is not always infrequent but always short-lived. Long sustained displays such as those with the teacher reported above simply do not occur with peers, even when the peers are in the role of teacher, such as in drill and step practice, engaged in regularly by the girls. Peggy Miller (correspondence, 10/29/80) in reaction to some of these ideas was prompted to write "The powerless wait (subserviently) and sulk (not so subserviently).

Sulking and Tracking

It is especially of interest that the shape of the student silence can be turned around so that it can have antithetical messages depending on when it is used and what body idiom and gestures it is wrapped in. The paradox in school is that at the same time silence is reified as a sign of "good control" and an indicator of a "well-run organization", it is also a punishable offense if used at the wrong time and in the wrong way.

With regard to control at the end of a special reading skills class the teacher was getting the class ready for dismissal. The class was still a bit noisy with sounds of small clusters of chatting. The teacher comments that she is waiting and that they have "no self-discipline." She goes on. "Here's a chance to rest your mouth and your mind..." The teacher explains that they've been working hard all period and now they can relax. (The work they have been doing has been primarily emphasizing receptive language - work books, short answer fill in the blank, listening to tapes, and the like.) When the students have almost all stopped talking and have given her their attention, she praises them and continues to get everyone quiet. "Isn't that nice - the sound of silence. There're still two who can't get it - it's called self-control." (All are silent now and their classroom teacher has come to collect them.) The special teacher addresses the classroom teacher in the same tone of performance, saying "Isn't that nice, Miss ________. It's called self-control."

As the example illustrates, silence is valued, equated with good emotion management (i.e., self-control) and rewarded when achieved. In the school cafeteria prizes are given to those who are quiet and controlled at lunch and "talkers" are punished publicly by having to stand at the wall and/or stay after school. Hallways are characterized by stern faced teachers and children monitoring for authority figures as they sneak "talks" In the crowded conditions and organizational structure of most of our schools, teachers are often judged by their colleagues and superiors by the orderliness of their lines, the silence in their classrooms and the "mannerliness" of their students. Many teachers feel that this type of control is imperative for an educational environment. One teacher, commenting about the need for structure and orderliness, which carries with it these enforced silence characteristics, said affectionately "They're only children. They need structure or they'll only get worse." One might speculate about what is behind the word "worse", but nonetheless this is the school priority and one the students must respond to in order to be successful.

The other side of the paradox is the silence a student displays when, for example, he or she does not answer a teacher's question. Such silence most often follows a teacher's request for a confession in public, e.g. "What were you doing?"

An answer in most cases would cause loss of face in front of peers. Silence is frequently an ego-saving measure, and often turns the loss of face back to the teacher. Of further interest is the fact that a silence will be an acceptable answer in some cases and not in others, depending on the way it is adorned. In response to the question posed above, "What were you doing?" I have observed a child look up at the teacher with a slightly bowed head and turned-up quizzical eyebrows in a submissive silence. The teacher in this case replied "Okay, but don't do it again." The submissive silence was interpretted as a satisfactory answer. In another interaction a different child, responding to the same questions, stood silent with chin up, her lower lip pushed forward and her eyebrows in a tight scowl. The teacher in this case replied "Answer me. I said answer me." The teacher's demand for a verbal answer was not met and the child was sent to the principal's office for discipline. Clearly these two events indicate that it is not merely the silence that is or is not appropriate, but the way in which the performance is adorned with body idiom and gestures.

It is easy to see that a child who displays emotion by sulking frequently in circumstances such as the example above, where the child was sent to the principal, might easily be labelled as having a bad attitude. I was anxious to discover more about the distribution of sulking behavior and how it might or might not be related to selection for the Academcs Plus Program. Therefore,in the second year of the study I followed the fourth graders to their new classes, visited sixth grade Academics Plus classes and additionally routinely observed a group of primary grade students. Some interesting facts emerged from this second round of wider ranging observations. In the first year I had built a profile of sulking behavior by an ad libitum event sampling method. That is, whenever the behavior occurred, I documented it. I could usually count on several good "sulking events" to take place on any given day, sometimes up to five in one hour. (Recall that I was observing two homogeneously grouped middle range classrooms.)

As I began to observe the Academics Plus classes, something strange happened. Poised with notebook in hand, I waited to continue sampling sulking events. And waited. And waited. No one was sulking! Further, the fact that there was little or no sulking behavior was even more surprising, because several of the students I observed sulking routinely the year before had been selected for the Academics Plus classes, and they were not sulking.

Earlier I mentioned that selection for Academics Plus was sometimes referred to by the teachers as "weeding out bad attitudes." Clearly the nature of the deference and demeanor of these classrooms was "proper." The selection process, though as subjective as most evaluations are, is based on a composite profile of academic and attitudinal attributes. It certainly is not as simple as - He sulks,, he's out. Students selected score from two to three levels below to a level above grade level academically. Sulkers and non-sulkers were picked. Yet somehow a uniformity of type emerges.

Take Rodney, for example. He was selected for the program despite the fact that he frequently sulked, and "had good and bad days" academically. In Rodney's case the "big thing" was that he had a "very involved mother" who was at the school almost every day doing volunteer activities, etc. His fourth grade teacher, who recommended him for the Academics Plus class, commented on the fact that he does not appear to be a "sulker" this year. She felt that as peer pressure encouraged that behavior in his class the year before, the same peer pressure with a selected group of peers would discourage sulking behavior. I must agree.

Further, the question of peer pressure becomes a rather significant one in the intermediate grades. Thus, issues of face-saving and peer audience sensitivity are more prominant concerns of an intermediate grade student. Not surprisingly, sulking, a face-saving device, seems to be a much more frequent and predictable occurrence in the intermediate grade (4-6). In my observations of primary grade students this year I have not witnessed these kinds of non-submissive silent displays, except in rare cases with children who have been labelled as "problems."

The issue of bad attitudes seems to become more significant in the intermediate grades. This is the same period that has been identified as the time of literacy drop-off as well. One must consider that in this particular setting the path that will most facilitate if not guarantee literacy is inclusion in the Academics Plus Program. (That is not to say that those not selected will not become literate, but that they might have to overcome more obstacles in order to do so.) The fact that the selection process has managed to weed out the behavior of sulking and bad attitudes in general suggest an answer for the original research question. There is indeed a relationship between propriety and literacy. The nature of that relationship will be explored further in the final section of this report.

IV. SPELLING "MISSISSIPPI": A LITERACY - RELATED SPEECH EVENT

There is a seeming paradox in verbal as well as silent communication in schools. Just as silence in some circumstances is prized and rewarded, but in others disapproved, so also verbal expression and language skills are prized and rewarded goals, but 'talking' is probably the offense for which students are most frequently reprimanded or punished--talking too much, at the wrong times, and about the wrong things. The two paradoxes, of course, are in large part two sides of the same coin: appropriate silence involves the absence of inappropriate talk, inappropriate silence involves the absence of appropriate talk.

Observation of verbal behavior that might count as 'bad attitude' led to a sense of classroom interaction as seeming to have two lines of activity, moving continuously in contrapuntal streams, with eruptions often at their intersections At first the task of observing a classroom seems overwhelming. The activity is constant and diverse: John and Rodney dueling with rulers, Towanda passing a note to Willa to invite her over after school , the teacher checking Roger's work and taking a brief pause to look up and scold Connie, who had just squealed because Sean pinched her arm, while Tyrone was asking Michele for a pencil. With time two broad categories emerge. There is one line of activity, organized and orchestrated by the teacher, who writes schedules on the board, gives assignments, dismisses children for lunch, gives rewards and punishments, and the like. These activities are foregrounded, public , and dominant. Interferences in their flow are thwarted, suppressed and punished. It is at this level that labels usually are given for what is happening in the classroom--we're doing math, reading, group projects, taking a test, checking homework, and the like. A second line of activity is the peer social interaction that is maintained through such channels as covert talk and secret notes. It's content is meant for peers, not adults.

Teachers usually perceive the second line of activity as irregular side events to one main level of interaction, the one they control. (I certianly did when I taught). An observer may listen to and see the steady stream of interaction among the students, ways of being in tune with one another, that teachers mostly glimpse only briefly at moments when they emerge inappropriately. Though the two lines of activity may be more clearly marked as distinct in traditional classrooms, I believe the distinction holds in more open classrooms as well. Certainly the distinction is maintained especially in intermediate grades, as the peer group emerges as a dynamic element.

Talkers, Tellers, and Steppers

"Talkers, against the wall," was not an unusual command to hear from a teacher in the hall or the supervisor of the cafeteria. Often the referent talker is used to label misbehaving children. Students know that "talking" is equated with misbehaving. Consider this comment one student wrote in a self-marking assignment at report card time:

> I have problems in behavior. I don't know why I talk a lot but I want to be different so I won't talk a lot. I'm not going to talk that much now and I will always be quiet and that's a promise.

"Tellers" (notes passed secretively between students) is a common channel for communication among peers in traditional classrooms where silence is expected. One only has to observe the skillful writing, tearing, folding, and cooperative passing performed while continually looking up to monitor the teacher's attention, to know how well practiced and private this channel of communication is. One student I observed chose a silent pause in a math lesson to tear, but too loudly, a message out of her tablet. The child looked up guiltily. The teacher only had to look at her sternly and say "After school!" No further explantions were needed. They both knew a rule ahd been broken, as did the others in the class who silently were witness to the event.

"Doing Steps" is a third type of peer interaction. Steps, drills and cheerleading are enthustiastically practiced and performed by groups of girls in a variety of informal contexts. Though it is not clear where the drilling stops and stepping begins, (in the view of some of the children themselves) they are definitely seen as distinct. I first noticed "steps" in the spring. Girls would almost burst out of the hall onto the playground, form lines and begin "doing steps". These are chorally chanted rhymes punctuated by a steady alternating rhythm of foot stepping and hand clapping. There are numerous rhymes. Each rhyme has its own choreography and rhythm. Entire recess periods would be spent "doing steps", and it was often difficult for students to stop when they went back to their classrooms. Girls would chant or "step" in the room and be told to "stop" or "settle down". The "steps" were not unique to this school and in fact one could see the same performances in parks, driveways and on front steps all over the city through the spring and summer months and until the cold weather came in the fall.

I was looking for the range of contexts in which sulking occurred and since "captains", skilled steppers, supervised the performance of steps, I was anxious to see if students might sulk with a peer teacher as they did with their adult teachers. I began to tape record and observe the practices in order to document the captain's instructional interactions. I also asked the children to teach me to "do steps" so I could learn not only the context of the rhymes but the methods of instruction the children used to "pass it on".

At the same time I was observing and tape recording practice sessions of the girls doing steps, the staff and administration turned attention to the performance also. The "dances" were labelled as "lewd", "fresh", "inappropriate for school", "disrespectful" and simply "too sexual". The attention was negative and the "dances" were banned from the school in a formal announcement by the principal over the public address system one morning.

In sum, "talkers" "tellers", and "steppers" are kinds of verbal performance that are not counted because they are not considered appropriate. All are loosely associated with "bad attitudes" and issues of propriety.

Stepping and Spelling Mississippi

One of the stepping street rhymes, "Mississippi", seemd to be not only related to matters of propriety but to literacy. The rhyme is performed by girls who line up in groups and orally chant while punctuating the talk with a steady rhythm of stepping and clapping. The steppers perform in chorus as well as indivisually down the line, taking their turn when called on.

Within the larger community, challenges and competitions were held in which different neighborhood blocks will perform "Mississippi" as well as other similar rhymes for judging. Groups will often have captains who are in charge, and names like "Stars" or "Bad Girls". In some cases groups will have uniforms. With my own group of girls, although several different block groups were represented, none had uniforms, though several thought they would be getting them soon. Most times, however, the performance happens spontaneously wherever an approrpriate setting is available. When the playground performances were no longer permitted, many of the fourth grade girls I was observing could be found doing steps in the school bathrooms. In fact, in the second academic year of the study, I was walking through the hall on one of the first back-to-school days and heard "Mississippi" being chanted in the bathroom. I stood and waited outside and sure enough some of my girls emerged.

"Mississippi" is performed in a variety of ways, each version having its own choreography and rhythm to accompany and accent the verbal alternations. Each version has as its core the spelling of the word Mississippi. These variations include description of and metaphorical references to the letters and on-going narratives which play with the letters as beginnings of utterances.

Thus performance of "Mississippi" is an intersection of visual and verbal codes, by using the body dramatically as an iconic sign for the letters. The most prominant, noticeable and controversial use of bodily representation of the letters is the formation of the letter s or"crooked letter". The transformation of the body into the letter s is demonstrated in a limbo-like dancing movement with one arm forming a crook at the shoulder. It is not uncommon to find an elementary school teacher asking students to make their bodies shape a letter or to treat letters as representatives of familiar objects or person as part of reading instruction. Yet although the steppers successfully perform such bodily letter representation, it is interpretted negatively; the iconic sign is dressed with too sexual a body idiom for school, and sometimes family contexts.

It appears that few observers actually associate the dance movement with the words or letters. The performances are not studied but only casually observed, if observed at all, by most of the staff. (More will be discussed concerning this later). Here it might be noted, the role that context plays in what body movements get interpretted as "too sexual". The range of teacher responses to the dance movements in "Mississippi" included "You had to be an adult to know it was suggestive", to "It's like an orgasm." "It's like nothing I've never seen before. It could be a nice kid, then all of a sudden it just comes over her." "It's like an epileptic fit." "It's bad." "Nasty."

At the kiddie discos sponsored by the school and parents, movements very similar if not identical to those in "Mississippi" are performed by children to no visible concern. On one occasion at a school disco one mother told me that she had seen "Mississippi." In a disapproving tone she said that her kindergarten daughter had learned it on the street. But she explained that she knew it was bad and had told her daughter that she was not allowed to do it anymore. We dropped the subject and the two of us began to dance with her daughter and several other children. As we danced, the young mother instructed the children in a step which included a similar limbo-like pose to one in the performance of Mississippi.

The Performance: Variations On A Theme

As mentioned above, "Mississippi" is performed in a variety of ways. The alternations which occur in the transcribed tapes include, for example, the following versions:

(1) A straight spelling, reciting each letter in rhythmic patterned clusters -

$$\mathrm{M} \quad \overset{'}{\mathrm{I}} \quad \mathrm{SS}\,\overset{'}{\mathrm{I}} \quad \mathrm{SS}\,\overset{'}{\mathrm{I}} \quad \mathrm{PP}\,\overset{'}{\mathrm{I}}$$

This version is somewhat familiar to many readers. It is not performed as frequently by the students as the next version, which is the most popular. This straight spelling is the most concrete literate form of the rhyme. (I also find myself chanting it in my head as I type this paper.)

(2) A spelling which includes a description of or metaphorical reference to the physical features of some of the letters -

M I CROOKED LETTER CROOKED LETTER I
CROOKED LETTER CROOKED LETTER I
HUMP BACK HUMP BACK I

In this version the "crooked letter" represents an S and the "hump back" represents a P. In most performances the words "crooked letter" are rarely said but numerous variations on the two words are uttered, including (spellings by the students whom I asked to write the words for me): Krookalada,kookaleda, kooky letta, cookie leter, kookaleta,kookalater, etc. The variations and play with the "crooked letter" not only in dance but in name make it stand out in the performance. The children sometimes refer to the entire genre of steps as "Kookelater Dances". They will also say "She's Kookelatering." when referring to or tattling on a performer. Similar but not so prominent are the alternations for the P, hump back. Sometimes the lines will go "Hump back, hump back" or "Jump back, Jump back" or a mixture such as "Hump back jump back."

(3) A narrative spelling which uses the letters of Mississippi to produce the first word of each sentence in an on-going narrative -

M for the money
I if ya give it to me
S sock it (to me)
S sock it (to me)
I if I buy it from ya
S sock it
S sock it
I if I take it from you
P pump it
P pump it
I :::

This version is often followed by version (2) above with a smooth transition. Many of the alterations of these varieties mix the different rhymes, taking pieces from each and blending them into a flowing new rhyme.

(4) Related narratives which are only punctuated with parts of the spelling of the word and in which the play with the narrative rather than the orthography dominates the verbal content -

Hey __(name)__ , Yo
You wanted on the phone
Who is it. Your nigger.
I bet he want my lips, my tits, my butt,
my smutt,
My crooked letter, crooked letter -I

In this last version only the last line has any relationship to the spelling of Mississippi. Further, the "crooked letter", by its position in the series of "wants", takes on an ambiguous sexual meaning, especially as the "crooked letter" is being adorned in dance.

In trying to establish just what verbal utterances in "Mississippi" were objectionable or inappropriate for school, I asked one of the teachers at the school, who had never seen the performance, to listen to the tape recordings and tell me when the rhymes would not be allowed in her classroom. I began with examples (1) and (2) above which caused no problem. On version (3) however, on the line "sock it" she said she would not allow it because it was suggestive. No doubt knowing that the rhyme was banned from school, the teacher,(a skillfull, flexible, quite artistic teacher and certainly not a prudish woman) was prepared to react to the first suggestion of sexuality or lack of propriety. Still, "Sock it to me" however, is quite a common phrase in media and print. Possibly the rhythm punctuating it with steps and claps adds to its suggestiveness. It is hard to know, but clearly there was some contextual clue at that point that made it unacceptable. Her suspicions were of course confirmed just seconds later when the line "push it, pump it" were heard. Another variation of this use of the letters to create a narrative plays with the position, sounds and meaning of the words and letters:

You took my Man, God damn
And pushed him in the EYE. Oh my

In this version the letter M does not start the first line. The words my man (man emphasized) represents the letter M but appear in a medial position in the line. The letter I is represented in this case with a homonym, eye. In both lines a rhythmic rhyme adds two beats to the line, punctuating and further setting off the M (man) and I (eye) words.

The four examples have been presented in an order from the most concretely literacy-related to the least; and from the least controversial to the most. Some teachers are aware of the range of this repetoire and have told me that when, asked to perform for adults, the "kids can clean it up." It is true that the narrative embellishments I collected were not recorded on the playground at school but privately with a few girls who had come to call me "aunt." Even then there was some hesitance and giggles in offering version (4). One teacher, hearing the version that used the words "God damn", said, "They would never say that to me." Her intonation implied not that she would ever like them to, but quite to the contrary it was a sign of respect that they wouldn't.

Thus there seemed to be a performance continum of the speech event and points on it where it crossed lines of propriety. This appeared true not only of the verbal performances but also of the dance movements. Kids would tell me that "Mr.________ said they could do it if they didn't do it nasty." They also might criticize peers who's performances were considered "fresh" or "showing off". There seemed considerable consensus in identifying kids who "did it nasty."

Conventionally Taught Literacy Skills

Many aspects of the performance could be identified as school-taught reading skills. Consider the following categories and examples:

(1) Word Analysis Skills

Word analysis skills are traditionally taught and tested in all elementary grades. These skills include syllabification (identifying the number of syllables in a word), rhyming, descriptions of letter, identification and production of letter sound (initial, medial and final), etc. In the above protocols each of these skills is performed and manipulated. Consider the rhyme of Yo and phone as not only rhyming but rhyming a final with a medial vowel sound. Syllables are manipulated and played with and counted off in every utterance by continuing stepping and clapping which does not appear in this transcription. Letter identification and description are creatively played with in the naming of the "crooked letter" (s) and the "hump back" (p).

(2) Comprehension Skills

A strange assortment of activities and categories in reading texts (basal readers) and a variety of reading workbooks and supplementary curriculum materials are loosely labelled comprehension skills. The concern here is not to question the validity of the category but to identify those elements in the performances presented above that might represent the conventionally labelled sub-skills that are seen as aspects of comprehension. Several of these skills seem relevant to the present analysis; identifying main ideas, characterization, composing and varying narratives around a given theme. These comprehension skills are more prominent aspects of the variations in the examples offered in (3) and (4). Especially in those combinations of sections of various versions (even in some cases borrowing from other stepping rhymes) where sense and continuity of story is maintained as the pieces merge. Playing with word meanings and homonyms as with I and eye in (3) is another aspect of comprehension.

(3) Good Citizenship Skills

Various labels (work habits and the like) have been given to this set of skills, but in some way or other it is taught and evaluated in school. Several citizenship curriculum projects have been funded and developed in recent years. Certinaly, too, the discussion thus far has pointed to the importance of "good attitudes" which are overlapping and related to "good citizenship". Included in this final set of skills (which have more to do with socialization for literacy) are such things as cooperaiton, organization and group participation. The group cohesion and cooperation in the performance of Mississippi is strikingly noticeable. With no adult authority present, lines get straight and performances practiced and mastered. Everyone is together, on beat and anxious to play their part well. I was especially impressed with this aspect of the performance of one particular group of girls who seemed almost incapable of performing in any synchrony in classroom activities. Their teacher and I had on occasion discussed this and I had naively suggested that they might be given some music or dance acitivities in class to help them feel "groupness" - they clearly did not need to *learn* this. In their own peer context they were able to demonstrate considerable expertise as a cooperative, highly organized and ebuliently participatory group.

Despite the fact that many of the conventionally school-taught literacy skills are performed competently in the speech event, they do not count as literacy or school related. Because the skills are adorned with sexual overtones, they are interpretted as defiant and improper. By using sexual inuendo and other markers of ownership in verbal context and body idiom, they have created interpretive frames that signal to any onlooker, that if indeed this is a literacy related performance it belongs to the children and not to the adults who ordinarily teach them rhymes, syllables, homonyms, spelling, reading comprehension, and the like.

Gimme Room: Ownership and Personalization

Further evidence of ownership and personalization can be found in a linguistic analysis of the transcribed tapes. For example, in the performance of "Mississippi" the entire line of girls begins with an instructional command in chorus - "Hey (name), Spell Mississippi, spell Mississippi right now." The individual called usually steps forward out of the line and performs the spelling rhyme in an oral solo as the others dance and clap and step with her. The solo performer is foregrounded and on stage. A common phrase that girls will utter as they first step out of the line to perform is "Give me room." (or "A-gim me room", more accurately represented). Indeed not only do they ask for "room" but they are expected to take it. Having your own style within the conventions and boundaries of the performance is expected and valued. Each girl does the performance with some embellishments and markers of individuality; the movements, the voice key, the verbal play and variation with mixing rhymes as well as modifying words (Iizaz) or adding phrases("freaky deaky", "no sweat", "gimme room").

Another marker of ownership is the frequent use of the pronoun "my". Girls will often say "you take *my* M *my* I *my* krookeleda krookeleda I." The use of the pronoun to mark ownership is further emphasized because of the use of body as iconic sign for the letter. Not only do they say my crooked letter, they become the crooked letter. (In some versions the enactment of the letter S stands more distant as they refer to "the kooky letta" (kooky+crazy in this version).)

The use of names additionally personlizes the event. Some of the girls create nicknames for this specific purpose to get a reduplication of two syllables (Darnella Dee Dee) which "sounds better" in the rhyme.

While the speech event is marked and bounded as belonging to the children it is clearly not a private, but a delibertely public, formal performance. It is performed in settings (front steps, playgrounds, parks, etc.) where there is usually a potential, generally varied, audience (adults, children, parents, teachers, friends, strangers, et al.,). The general enthusiasm and visible cohesion of the 'steppers' both sets the event as something owned by the performers and attracts attention. The chanting is distinct and inviting, a form of broadcasting, rather than a use of the voice meant to be shared only within the group.

Because the performance is marked as public, teachers' expectations of propriety are somewhat jarred. It is one thing to know the rhymes and to share them in private among peers, but polished public performance is viewed by many as defiant. One teacher said, "it was meant for us to notice and meant for us to stop". On the other hand, the same teacher spoke of the event as 'ethcin;, reminscent of African folk dances, noting a similarity with performances by the Arthur Hall dancers, who had been at the school.

While teachers and parents had heard and seen the steps' performed enough to notice and ban it, most had never listened to it enough to be aware of the general content. Rather, they were aware of isolated signal words and phrases that were considered too sexual or improper.

While "Mississippi" is the most popular, and most literacy related, of the rhymes, it is only one of a genre (which include, for example, "Sexy Alice", "Twist", "La Ching Ching", "Sweet As"). Some of these other rhymes are more explicitly sexually descriptive. Consider the following:

Twist - Twi:::st, Twi:::st
My name is ______ and I do the twist
My nigger told me to do it like this
I said oo ahh
Feels good, like it should

Often when referring to "Mississippi" an adult might give a word or phrase from "Twist" or one of the other "steps" , as what made what they called "Mississippi" objectionable. Certainly none of the teachers ever mentioned to me that they were aware of anything in the performance that might be of relevance to school work.

One must consider just what it was that the girls themselves knew about what they were chanting. The rhymes can be viewed as a ritualized practice for adolescence, an experience typical of this age (9-12), where mastery experiences are practiced for their own sake. The genre seems to have cut-off age. When teenagers perform Mississippi, it is not considered appropriate by these intermediate grade school girls, who say "They too old. They look dumb." "They show off. It's fresh." These comments suggest that the behavior belongs primarily to the transitional periods between childhood and adolescence. Several of the more physcially mature students will stand aside when the group performs, and give a variety of reasons for doing so. Though the movements and theme may be sexual, the mode is clearly playful. The older girls are considered "dumb" probably because their displays are too strong and real for this genre. The younger girls are caught up in the repetition of the sounds and movements they create as a group. Like the boys who run out to play ball, they run out to do steps.

How Literacy-Related?

Though an analysis like the one above can point out aspects of the verbal performance in the speech event that are reflective of a set of competencies and skills that are associated with literacy, that is not to say a student performing "Mississippi" is literate or conscious of the elements of literacy being played with. Many variations of the spelling of the word Mississippi mix up the sequence of the letters or put extra crooked letters in, and the like.

To discover more about what connection, if any, the students made between the rhyme and spelling, I decided to ask them. After a group finished a performance of "Mississippi", I put the word Mississippi in big letters on a piece of paper and held it up to them. I asked if the steps they had just performed and the words they had just chanted had anything to do with the word on the paper. They sat looking at the paper and saying "M I Kookeleda kookeleda I...". They then said only the M and the I were the same, nothing else. They did not identify the crooked letter as the S not the hump back as the P. In other groups I asked some students told me that this was indeed the spelling and knew that the names represented specific letters. In one group a girl pointed out the fact that it followed the version "M for the money, I if I give it to you..." Everyone seemed pretty impressed with that fact. I asked if they could do something like that with any word, that is make up a "drill". Towanda said "Give us a word. C'mon give us a word and we'll try it." I gave the them the name of their school and they immediately set out in a huddle to create a new drill. In a few minutes they were ready to perform. (Since Shortridge is a protective and ficticious name and the actual school name was used in the event I will not provide the full rhyme here but discuss several aspects that are relevant but not revealing.) They had come up with a dance and a full rhyme which followed the pattern in example (3) above, that is, a narrative spelling with each letter followed by a word or phrase that began with that same letter. They also added a coda "Shortridge Shortridge is my skizzaz." "Skizzaz" means school but "sounds better" I was told. I pointed out that in version (2) they use names for letters that tell about what the letter looks like. Could they come up with one like that? They said "yes" and did. For the S they used the crooked letter which was already known but they came up with jiggle-jay to describe, name and represent the G.

In several of these school name versions, the letters M and I were sometimes included at the beginning or end of a line. Such departures from strict adherence to spelling may have been a way of marking the genre itself, quoting the most salient elements of its most salient form, almost perhaps a way of naming it in performance.

In sum, there was wide variation in making a connection between the memorized, manipulated performance and spelling, rhyming, initial sound similarities, and the like. The data collected does not indicate any correlation between age or academic success and this literacy-related awareness. A point of special interest is the fact that many who did not at first see the connection were able to use it, once it was brought to their attention. The invention of a drill for the school name implies an ability to use the underlying patterns creatively. The connection with features of literacy was present, out of awareness, needing only a stimulus to be used productively. There was also pride in the result. One girl said, after the performance, "you wait. This'll get around now." They all agreed to take equal credit even though two girls did most of the creating.

The children's excitement and enthusiasm about "street rhymes" in general and the richness the rhymes offer as a resource for teaching literacy skills, had prompted one talented teacher in the school to develop an entire curriculum around them. Many of the skills listed in the section above are included in her reading program. All of the skills are identified in the rhymes and then made explicit for the students (see Mitchell, Ph.D dissertation, in prep). The curriculum mentioned here howerver is targeted for primary grade students and based on jump rope rhymes.

Rymes were collected from around the country and then the teacher selected those rhymes she felt would be of interest as well as contain useful vocabulary, lend themselves to skill work, and finally, be appropriate for school. Topics and vocabulary not suitable for school were ruled out. Thus a rhyme like "Mississippi" would not be used because it is too controversial.

V. ADMISSION TO LITERACY

Sulking and Stepping: The Enactment of Attitude

The general question posed at the start of this investigation was whether or not there exists a relationship between propriety and literacy, and if so what is its nature. Sulking and stepping were examined, both performances generally viewed as representative of "bad" or "deteriorating attitudes" yet in most other ways highly contrastive. By the very nature of their differences, indeed, they provide a complementary view.

Consider some of the contrasts of the two events. Sulking is performed by both sexes, though there is some variation in the style of performance according to sex. Steps, on the other hand, are performed only by girls. Though on occasion boys will chant or do some of the movements, it is usually done satirically to tease the girls. Boys do sometimes participate by coming up close to one of the performers as if to dance, but the girls get angry and chase them away, telling them they are being fresh.

Another contrast is that while sulking is clearly an individual device, stepping is a cohesive group behavior. Though on occasion one might come upon a situation where a group of students simultaneously were expressing the same sulking body idiom and facial expression, it would not be a cooperative endeavor, but a coincidence of corresponding emotions. For example, two children were observed sulking through their lunch period, (Section II, Excerpt E) but clearly they were not sulking together. The two were sulking individually and simultaneously. In the same way a child might practice "Mississippi" alone or chant to herself quietly as she sits working at her desk, but this is not what doing steps is about. Doing steps is a group event.

Another contrast is that sulking is primarily silent and stepping verbal and musical. Though in both cases body gestures are important, the verbal channel is central in the stepping chants.

The audience in each event is quite different also. Sulking is performed mainly to an individual authority figure. The individual sulker is subordinate in status to the receiver of the display. Though the display, which is often used as a face-saving device, is certainly meant to be seen by onlooking peers, the primary audience is the adult in control. To the contrary, steps are performed and publically broadcast to a wide and non-specific audience including all ages, statuses, and the like.

The settings for the different events reflect the nature of the two kinds of audiences. Sulking appears in settings where an authority figure is in control and usually in direct conflict with the performer. Classrooms, hallways, lunchrooms and the like are predictable settings for this kind of display. Further, the behavior will appear more in classes which have not "weeded out bad attitudes". In settings where propriety has been selected for, such as in the Academics Plus classes, few if any sulking events will be observed. Certain agreed upon expectations of attitude and behavior in the Academics Plus classes have changed the classroom context in a way that makes sulking no longer adaptive. Stepping occurs in most of the settings where sulking does not. It will be performed in setting where little or no authority will be in control, e.g., playgrounds, streets, driveways, front steps and (before the ban) schoolyards.

Another contrastive aspect of the two events is the key in which they are performed. Sulking is generally displayed in an angry dissatisfied key. Stepping on the other hand is generally a happy, and rather ebulient event. Sulking withholds while stepping bursts forth. Certainly, as several examples in the discussion above (Section 3) demonstrate, a sulk does not require its performer to actually be in an angry emotional state. Sulking conveys anger or dissatisfaction and can therefore be used as a communicative device for a variety of functions. In the same way someone "doin steps" might not be feeling happy, but the performance nonetheless is done in a happy key.

A final contrast should be considered. In the case of sulking, the individuals are held responsible and accountable for their actions. The individual who sulks has various other negative characteristics attributed to him or her as a result. In fact, the act of sulking itself is rarely if ever mentioned (only by teachers who had read my preliminary findings). It is almost never consciously a part of the assessment of a student's attitude. A strong contrast is offered in the case of stepping where the dance itself becomes the target of criticism, and not the individual performers. All the girls participate. All the girls can't be bad.

Though there is variety in the performance and use of both communicative events, their primary contrasts can generally be summarized in two columns:

	Sulking	Stepping
Performer	Individual	Group
Channel	Nonverbal	Oral (chant) and Nonverbal
Receiver	Specific authority	Diverse non-specific audience
Setting	Official space, inside	Public space, outside
Key	Appears angry	Appears happy
Focus of criticism	Performer	Genre
Norm of Interaction	Interactional response	Self-initiated performance

Together the two events provide a range of settings and participants that cover almost every aspect of the community. Let us turn our attention now to aspects of the two events that can be seen as similar. There are only a few and they are suggestive of some of the broader concerns of the study.

The most obvious similarity between sulking and stepping were that they are age-related. Though sulking and stepping are not performed exclusively by the intermediate grade (4 - 6) students, they are significantly more prominent in those grades. This is of particular interest because of the concern with literacy drop-off rates. Both events shed some light on this topic. Sulking is not seen as cooperative or proper and therefore can keep many children out of the Academics Plus classes where the potential for success in literacy is maximized. As an enactment of attitude, sulking emerges more prominently at the 4 - 6th grade. Further, it is related to tracking and therefore indirectly to literacy. One might consider the tracking procedure as an invitation to literacy. Sulking is not consciously but quite effectively selected out in the process of choosing those who are invited into literacy.

Stepping, though also age related to this literacy drop-off period, has no effects on tracking. Stepping does, however, provide us with an interesting body of data about a set of literacy-related competencies that these children clearly display. As described earlier, the skills do not count, however, because they are adorned defiantly with inappropriate demeanor.

Both sulking and stepping illustrate the importance of concerns with politeness and issues of deference and demeanor. Both are interpreted with regard to "attitude". The question of language, affect, and the display of emotions and attitudes are a prominent aspect of schools and therefore a major concern in the acquisition of literacy.

Another similairty between the two events has to do with the way they are treated. As mentioned elsewhere in this report (Watkins), though the entire Shortridge student population is Black, the faculty is both Black and White (50%/50%). The data suggest that there are in general commonly held views about these two events that are slightly different for most Blacks and Whites. The data consists of views directly expressed about sulking and stepping, observations of the ways in which Black and White teachers behaved in response to these behaviors, and finally comments made by the faculty about the differences they themselves were conscious of concerning the way White teachers and Black teachers responded. In general, it was felt that White teachers tended to be more "lenient" and "permissive" where both types of communication were concerned.

A Black teacher was more likely to discipline a dramatic sulking display, sending the child to the office, calling the parent, or in some way immediately chastizing the student. A White teacher might be more likely to ask a child to verbalize his or her feelings as well as directly refer to the feelings the display seemed to communicate (e.g., I can see you're feeling angry). In general, Whites were seen as less likely to discipline these "temper tantrums."

In the case of stepping and performing "Mississippi" the same general view existed. Black teachers in general were less likely to permit performances of the dances and stop them immediately. White teachers tended to be more ambiguous about the behavior, and less likely to stop it when it first appeared in the spring.

In both cases sulking and stepping seem to be seen as "cultural" variations of expression and communication. Sulking in the highly stylized way it is performed by many of the students, can easily be seen as a part of a stereotypic communicative style of Blacks. Much the way a Jewish or Italian gestural style might be characterized, so too this behavior might be interpretted as a Black gestural performance. Similarly "doin steps" is something that Black kids do. Also the musical chants and movements have been referred to by several white teachers as "ethnic-type dances", reminiscent of "African music", "similar to the Arthur Hall dancers", etc.

One teacher suggested that White teachers might be more tolerant of such behaviors as sulking and stepping because they are "intimidated" by Black children and their parents. The data suggest another possibility. As a result of the controversy over the use of non-standard varieties of English and in the recent concern with bilingual and multi-cultural education, there has grown an increased sensitivity to and awareness of cultural variation in communication. By allowing these behaviors White teachers believe they are expressing an acceptance of cultural diversity. Teachers are concerned about "racial statements" and responsive to them. One White teacher told me she had been "too lenient" about the "Mississippi dances." She came to this conclusion when she overheard a Black teacher's comment about another White teacher being completely tolerant of the dance until his own daughter learned it.

Black teachers and parents frequently express the concern that this permissiveness and lenience are signs of "low standards for" or "not caring about" these Black kids and whether they learn the necessary skills, attitudinal and academic, which are seen as prerequisite to success. White teachers, too, express similar concerns about "low standards" often looking to what the Black teachers do in search of appropriate models for reaction.

Thus the problem remains: Knowing cultural diversity exists, what do you do about it? On the one hand one risks squelching cultural behaviors because they seem incompatible with success. On the other hand, inappropriate behaviors may go unchallenged because they are seen as cultural.

Observing in the same school setting, I was not only able to see the existence of the above dilemma I was also able to observe a number of teachers who found ways to resolve it. Teasing, humor and affection were effective means used successfully by both Black and White teachers dealing with sulking behavior. By using devices such as these, teachers were most often able to stop the sulking while at the same time indicate its inappropriateness.

Consider another productive way one Black teacher found to respond to children's street rhymes. She developed a special curriculum (mentioned above in Section IV) using street rhymes as a way of teaching literacy skills. As the rhymes are used in the classroom, children experience the richness of a culturally familiar language event while at the same time they learn how it may be transformed into an appropriate school behavior. From the text of the rhymes, children learn vocabulary and a variety of word analysis and comprehension skills similar to those identified and described above for "Mississippi". Additionally, they learn about what is viewed as appropriate language and social behavior in school. The teacher might say "Now that's how you might say that when you're out on the street jumping rope, but we're in school now. How could you say that in school?" In this way, students use cultural language behavior at school at the same time they learn both literacy skills _and_ appropriate "attitude" skills.

Summary

Ordinarily one hears the phrase "the acquisition of literacy." There is no doubt that literacy is indeed acquired. But it is also likely that in educational research we concentrate too heavily on the question of acquiring literacy which is a rather natural process that all children should be able to accomplish with little difficulty (see, for example, discussions by Heath 1979; Labov 1981). This discussion has focused instead on a little thought about or addressed question which concerns "the admission to literacy."

In order to be seen and sanctioned as literate, students must display appropriate attitudes. Students thus gain admission to classroom contexts where literacy is made more easily available. This is made quite explicity in the requirements for the Academics Plus Program.

The trading of politeness for literacy becomes more problematic, however, in the intermediate grades where age-related behaviors like sulking and stepping, viewed as impolite and inappropriate, become more prominent. The behaviors themselves are a part of the behavioral repertoire the children bring to school from the community. The ways in which these behaviors are used and interpretted in the context of school are of immediate concern to study language and literacy.

Consider once more the performance of "Mississippi." The steppers perform an entire "instructional routine" which sounds in many ways like what one might expect in a school classroom. Directions are called to an individual to spell a word - Mississippi, a difficult word to spell at that. Yet there are several aspects of the instructional direction that seem to break with expected norms of speech and politeness and with predicatable co-occurrence rules.

First, instead of a single teacher's voice, the entire group of steppers chant the request in loud chorus. This reverses a stereotypic model of an individual teacher request followed by an entire class's choral response. The request itself has marked characteristics that counter expectations of what a classroom teacher would say.

> "Hey, (name) . Spell Mississippi. Spell
> Mississippi, right now!"

The request sounds more like a challenge or a dare. Consider some of the linguistic markers that run counter to expectations of co-occurrence rules. The use of the word "Hey" is informal, usually considered inappropriate for school, and has a slightly threatening quality - as if one is being "called out" rather than "called on." Further, there is an impatient tone to the demand as a result of the quick repetition "Spell Mississippi" and the conclusion "right now." It has been pointed out that teachers tend to use politeness forms frequently to modify the power and control they have, thus softening acts of instruction that might be interpretted as face-threatening to students (see Cazden, 1979). The teacher request in "Mississippi" seems to do exactly the opposite. Politeness forms are absent and the face-threatening nature is intensified even though the tone is not an angry one.

The stepper who is called on to perform the spelling task usually utters a quick phrase as she jumps forward out of the line to begin her routine. The most frequently used phrases were "Gimme room" and "No sweat." Both utterances indicate the stepper's willingness to take on the dare and the stepper's confidence that the performance is fully within the range of her competencies. Thus the instructional routine sets up an aggressive teacher command, delivered almost as a dare and a student stepper who takes on the challenge with a swagger and obvious confidence about her spelling prowess. The final break from expectation is that the spelling itself is adorned in sexually suggestive dance movements that clearly mark it as inappropriate for school.

A spelling exercise, ordinarily practiced in the classroom is transformed through play with a marked shift in ownership. By reframing the instructional exchange with both linguistic and paralinguistic markers the performance of this speech event becomes personalized, owned and bounded within the domain of the peer group. The literacy-related behaviors are recontextualized - taken from the school's model of literacy instruction and made a part of the children's own world. Thus by using sexual overtones and other markers of ownership, interpretive frames are created that signal to onlookers that this particular performance of literacy-related behaviors does not belong to or count for school.

It has been pointed out (in Section IV) that the performers are not always very aware of "Mississippi" as a literacy-related event. They are merely performing a play routine. But evidence that the genre is generative and that the children have the skills, is demonstrated in the example of the creation of a new rhyme and dance for the school name. Thus the message conveyed through "Mississippi" can seem a poignant one. It is not merely defiant - it can easily be seen as face-saving. At the end of the performance when everyone has individually performed, the chorus chants, "Hey, Steppers, Spell Mississippi. Spell Mississippi, right now!" The entire group then does the spelling performance in a striking flourish, declaring for all to see, their excellence as spellers, as dancers, and as kids.

In this respect, one final similarity between sulking and stepping can be suggested. Both behaviors not only break with expectations of appropriate deference and demeanor, but they can be viewed as ways of saving face and maintaining dignity through collective (Mississippi) or individual (sulking) autonomy when confronted with the control and authority at school.

When some of these findings were shared with teachers who were involved in the research, one teacher expressed a concern that with too much emphasis on propriety there was a possibility that students would not be encouraged to become the critical thinkers and outspoken citizens we wished them to be. On a different occasion, the same concern was expressed by a father who was not involved in the study. On the day parents visited the classrooms, he asked one teacher whether some of the conformity to school notions of what's proper and right left enough room for the individual.

The research reminds us of the delicate balance between demands for student propriety and demands for literacy and academic performance. By examining such behaviors as sulking and stepping, we learn more about what kids are doing and why. Sulking is rarely consciously noted as a separate behavior to look at or understand yet it can provide insight into the much-neglected area of the development of the expression of emotions and the role it plays in learning. In the case of stepping, though the behavior is seen, it is rarely looked at or listened to for any length of time. The obvious markers of inappropriateness kept adults from examining it further. Yet to know the children we teach and what they are capable of doing and how they feel about it, is imperative for sensitive and successful instruction. By carefully examining what these steppers do with language, we come to understand better who they are and what they need.

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(E) SHORTRIDGE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: BOYS' VERBAL ABILITIES

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PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW
    Setting 1
    Data 4

II. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR 5

III. SOME FEATURES OF THE CLASSROOM 9
    Black English 9
    Classroom interaction and direct questioning 11
    The use of "discussion" 11
    Success through written work 13

IV. THE SOCIAL WORLD OF THE BOYS 14
    Non-school environment 15
    School environment: "being educational" 18

V. WRITTEN AND ORAL ABILITIES IN RELATION TO STATUS AND IDENTITY 22
    Bustin' 23
    Story telling 26
    Word use 31

VI. CONCLUSION: TWO KINDS OF RATIONAL BEHAVIOR 32

I. INTRODUCTION

Christine read the paragraph about Mr. Jones' farm. When she had finished reading the paragraph Mrs. Hanson asked, "What do they mean 'spread soft earth', Delia?" Before she could answer, Mrs. Hanson snapped, "Teddy, are you paying attention?" "Yeh", was his response. "What's the title to what was just read?" asked Mrs. Hanson. Teddy did not reply and the lesson continued as Mrs. Hanson called on another pupil to read aloud.

After having assigned a reading passage beginning on page 156 and assigning questions based on that reading on page 307, Mrs. Hanson found that a number of the children were having difficulty completing the questions. In going over the questions she asked, "Back in the 1700's we had the Constitution for our laws. What do we have for our laws now, Charles?" Charles replied, "You can't go past a red light." Mrs. Hanson quickly called on another student almost as if she hadn't heard Charles' response.

An incident like the above could be seen as an inconsequential, foreseeable and even humorous turn of educational events. After all, even the best students can misunderstand and the sharpest mind can wander occasionally. When such incidents become regular and recurrent, however, they also become problematic. The purpose of this paper is to examine and document some behaviors of fifth grade students seen as problematic by their teacher, and to relate these behaviors to systematic features of the school situation. The behaviors of these students and those of their teachers are rational and predictable ways of dealing with the interactional and institutional context in which they find themselves. More specifically, for some students the constraints in the organization of classroom interaction are such that behavior seen as inappropriate by their classroom teacher may be among the only ways of generating positive feelings of self-worth.

Setting

The setting is a fifth-grade classroom at Shortridge School in Philadelphia's District I. Shortridge is attended by children living in a predominately black residential area of row homes within a three or four black radius of the school.

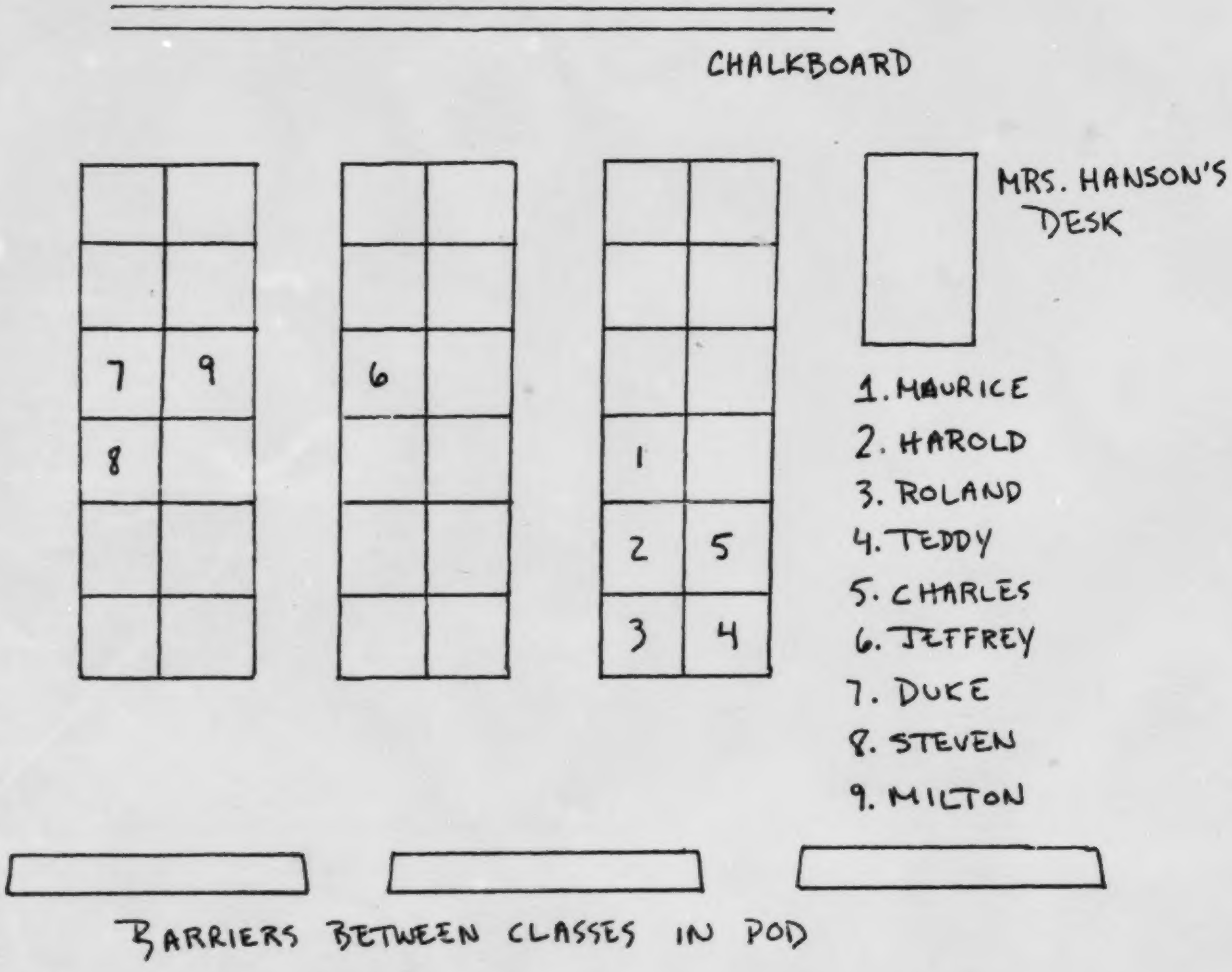
This is the first year for a fifth-grade program. In the past the school taught kindergarten through fourth-grade classes. The new fifth-grade program as part of a district-wide effort entitled "Academic Plus", embraces a "Back-to-Basics" approach. "Back-to-Basics" means a stress on basic skills such as reading, writing and math with homework playing a large role. Children are selected for the program on the basis of willingness of parents to cooperate. Parents must agree to sign all homework and attend conferences when scheduled by the teacher. Those children of fifth-grade age who were not selected for one of the three Academic Plus classes were sent to another elementary school.

All three classes are taught in a large open classroom area called a "pod". The pod is divided by physical barriers into four sections, three of which are fifth-grade classes. The barriers do not completely eliminate visual access to the other class spaces as they don't extend all the way across the class space boundaries and don't reach to the ceiling. Sound travels freely from one class to the next.

Each class consists of children of varying ability as measured by standardized tests. Though each class spends much of the day together at appointed times "cycling" occurs. At such times children re-group and change classes according to their math or reading "level", again measured by standardized tests. Thus a child may have a different teacher and different classmates for reading, math or social studies.

The bulk of the time that I spent observing classrooms was spent with Mrs. Hanson (pseudonym), one of the fifth-grade teachers and the group of children she spends most of her day with. She does not live in the area and school is a ten or fifteen minute drive for her. Mrs. Hanson, a black woman in her mid-forties, strikes one as an extremely dedicated and hardworking woman. She serves on a number of committees and attends various workshops whose purposes are to consider educational issues and to improve children's education. She is constantly searching for and is receptive to new techniques and ideas that she feels will make her a more effective teacher. Her participation in this project is further evidence of her commitment to teaching (and learning). She is seen by parents, other teachers and the principal as one of the best teachers in the school.

Mrs. Hanson's classroom had about thirty-six desks for thirty-four students. Desks were arranged into three columns running perpendicular to the blackboard. Each column consisted of twelve desks, and was actually two columns of six desks each arranged to face the other. The edges of the desks touched, making each column into what was called a "table", with all the children facing each other (see drawing).


CHALKBOARD
MRS. HANSON'S DESK
7
9
8
6
1
2
5
3
4
1. MAURICE
2. HAROLD
3. ROLAND
4. TEDDY
5. CHARLES
6. JEFFREY
7. DUKE
8. STEVEN
9. MILTON
BARRIERS BETWEEN CLASSES IN POD

Data

Perhaps the most important source of information was a series of "interviews" with the children in Mrs. Hanson's class. The interviews began as a way to get to know the children in the class quickly in an atmosphere that could be novel and fun. With Mrs. Hanson's permission, I took five or six children at a time to a small, unused room with a small table, a few chairs and other educational artifacts where we could talk freely without disrupting classroom activity. The children were eager and curious to be interviewed as it was something different for them and provided a break in the daily routine. Many of the interview sessions were taped, all with the children's permission. The interview situation was extremely informal and I did little in the way of controlling or structuring the interaction. I would ask questions and allow the children to ask me questions on almost any topic. Conversation was generally spontaneous and easy-going. In addition to talking, many children were anxious to demonstrate their talents and would get up and show me the latest dance, perform a tap dance routine they had learned or sing some of their favorite songs.

Another important source of data was observation made in Mrs. Hanson's classroom and in and around the school building (cafetaria, gym class, etc.) In addition to interviews with the children and observation of classroom and other interaction, another important source of data was weekly meetings between Mrs. Hanson and myself. These meetings ranged in format from interview to discussion. In such meetings we would discuss such topics as: happenings in the classroom that day, her and my perceptions of various children, issues of achievement, testing, discipline, School Board policies, etc.

After an initial round of interviews, numerous days of observation and a series of meetings with Mrs. Hanson, I became intrigued with marked discrepancies between the behaviors of certain boys in the interview situation and in the class. In the interview situation, the boys seemed enthusiastic, animated, interested and curious. In class these same boys (see diagram for seating locations of boys), often seemed to be uninvolved in the lesson, unable to answer even the simplest of questions, often on the wrong page and frequently involved in disruptive behavior such as talking while the teacher talked, arguing or passing notes. These boys were the focus of much of the commentary and disciplinary action taken by Mrs. Hanson. Further, in our weekly meetings as Mrs. Hanson and I discussed these children and classroom events, it became clear that Mrs. Hanson's perceptions of these boys differed markedly from mine. She often used the terms "zapped out", or "tuned out" in referring to these children. I began to wonder how there could be such marked discrepancies in behavior and perception and decided to focus the majority of my attention on the boys in question and their relation to the educational process and to try to understand the dynamics of this behavior.

Thus I continued my interview program working predominantly with the boys I had identified. They were eager to continue the interview program as it allowed them a chance to get out of class and have some fun in a novel environment. At least once or twice a week we would eat lunch together and gradually a rapport developed.

After school and on the weekends I would drive around the neighborhood and before long come across one or two of the boys I had been working with. We would talk, go to the park or just take a ride. Often, in dropping the boys off I would meet their parents and get to know them as well. It is from a combination of the above data-gathering processes that the analysis which follows is drawn.

II. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Recall the incident cited at the opening of this paper. Teddy, one of the boys at Table 1, (see diagram) was asked if he was paying attention. He replied that he was but was unwilling or unable to tell the teacher the title of the passage being read at the time. Soon afterwards, a question was directed toward Charles, another boy from Table 1, concerning the Constitution and the legal system. Charles replied, "you can't go past a red light", a seemingly ridiculous response.

After class I spoke with Mrs. Hanson about the "red light" incident, and she commented as follows:

> I didn't think you heard that. Usually, when he says something

> really zapped out like that I try to go over it as quickly as possible so the other children won't start laughing at him. A lot of times he laughs too, but I think that's just a cover-up.

Note that Mrs. Hanson refers to Charles' behavior as "zapped out". Such behavior is so commonplace and recognizable that it warrants a special term in her way of speaking about students. She also refers to students as "tuned out" as in the following:

> "People like Charles or Harold really seem to be tuned out. They hardly ever know what's going on in class and half the time they're on the wrong page."

Such characterizations as "zapped out" or "tuned out" apply to behavior seen by Mrs. Hanson as disruptive or indicative of a lack of interest in the lesson being taught. Further, such terms are most commonly applied to the group of five or six boys who sit together at Table 1.

In order to round out the picture of the problematic behavior defined by Mrs. Hanson, consider the following illustrations taken from classroom observation:

> Mrs. Hanson asked the class, "Who's having trouble with the questions?" and asked for a show of hands. About half of the children in the class put their hands up. She then commented, "It's interesting to see how those who didn't understand the question aren't even looking in the book. Like you Charles, what page are you on?" "Page 56". "Well we're on 307." I got up a few moments later and noted that Charles was actually on page 156, the page on which the reading passage for the question under discussion was located.

Classroom dialogue is often punctuated with remarks by Mrs. Hanson like:

> "Harold, you may need this information someday."
>
> or
>
> "Charles, do you have a page 25?"
> "Are you paying attention? I don't want you to tell me later that you don't understand."

Incidents like the above are not unique to Mrs. Hanson's class, but occur in other classes as well. The following field note relates a discussion which occured between Cheryl and another fifth-grade teacher at lunch.

> Mrs. Hanson and another fifth-grade teacher began discussing what they had been working on in class that day. Chellie was walking about her social studies class. Apparently she had been focusing on current

> events of the last decade. She then proceeded to read a paragraph about Christopher Columbus and how he had sailed the Atlantic and discovered America. Next the teacher asked the class in what year the story she had just read occurred. She expressed shock at hearing one of her brighter students say "1968". Other students in the class volunteered dates between 1968 and 1978. She was amazed at this and explained it by saying that the class "wasn't thinking".

The above incidents can be seen to be examples of fifth-graders failing at the most elementary tasks. Mrs. Hanson interprets these incidents as evidence of a lack of ability on the part of these children. This can be seen in the note reported below, obtained from an interview with Mrs. Hanson during which her perceptions of the boys I was working with were further explored. About Teddy, she states:

> I think his size is a large part of his problem. When he came here his father didn't want him to be here. He had heard that (Trumbull) had a bad reputation and felt that Teddy was too advanced for the class. However, test results showed he was three years behind. Overall Teddy is operating on a third-grade level. He's not really bright, and from classroom discussion, he seems to be lacking in experience. He really didn't bring much to school. I would guess that he's the type of child that came to school not knowing his address or phone number in kindergarten.

Mrs. Hanson characterized Charles as follows:

> Charles is lower in ability than Teddy or Roland. He's in about the same league as Maurice although he's a little ahead of Maurice. He tries. I had to move Charles away from Steven and Duke because he was causing conflicts. It was always "Charles took my pen", or something. Charles is a chronic liar. He can look you right in the eye and lie when you saw him do it.

In the above, Charles is compared with Maurice. Maurice is being retained in grade 5 this year because of his inability to do the work. In fact, Mrs. Hanson suggsted that Maurice be tested for a learning disability. Thus, Mrs. Hanson's estimates of Charles' abilities are very low indeed.

Another aspect of being turned off to school involves disruptive behavior in class. Mrs. Hanson has often commented about "the pen business".

> That same little group got into this pen business again. They're always arguing about something. I guess Harold's mother gets these pens from where she works. Today they were at it again arguing and making a lot of noise. I asked what it was all about and Harold said that Teddy wouldn't give him his pen back. I told him before not to lend out his pens anymore if it's going to cause this much trouble. But if it's not the pen, it's something else.

Mrs. Hanson's complaints about disruptive behavior usually involve arguments that seem senseless among the boys. One day, when a substitute teacher came to class, I was able to take a seat very near to the cluster of boys' desks at Table 1 and to overhear a good deal of the type of interaction that would fall under "the pen business".

The substitute came in and posted an assignment on the board for the children to work on. She then assumed her seat and left the children to do the assignment on their own, while she read and graded papers. The noise level in the room was louder than would normally be tolerated by Mrs. Hanson and the behavior reported below would have certainly drawn her censure.

> Teddy was thumbing through a Sports Illustrated magazine. He came to an insert for subscriptions to the magazine. "Wow, one-half price", he exclaimed. He pulled out one of the subscription cards and gave it to Charles and set out filling out the other one himself. Charles was thumbing through a small book he had. He was boasting about all the phone numbers he had. Harold was asking if he had Debbie's phone number and the numbers of other girls in the class. Charles then picked up the subscription card to SI. He said to Harold, "I got your phone number but what's your address?" Harold told him his address which Charles copied onto the subscription card. When Harold saw what Charles was doing, he became outraged. "Hey man, what you doin'? You better not send that in or I'll call the police." They argued back and forth until the teacher interrupted and told them to quiet down.
>
> At one point Harold said to Rebecca who sat across and over from him, "You look like somebody I know." Rebecca replied, "Who?" "You look like my dog." Several boys broke out laughing. Charles addressed Roland, "Hey country boy." Roland responded, "For your information, I was born in the city." Charles replied, "Okay Roland, you cool, you my friend." He extended his hand to Roland. Roland refused to shake, saying, "Get away from me, you'll just keep callin' me a country boy." To this Charles replied, "Man, I've never seen a country boy so upset." All within earshot broke into laughter.
>
> Roland fell silent and began doing his work. Teddy asked him how to spell "tomorrow". Roland spelled it for him and then said, "Man, you know as much as a first-grader would down South." Then he noticed that Teddy had filled out the Sports Illustrated form incorrectly and commented, "Look at that, you got your address in the wrong place." Teddy defended himself, saying, "Man, I know how to fill out an application."

The above field note provides an example of the type of interaction that occurs when the children are at their seats. Several times the teacher had to tell them to quiet down and do their work. Note that the interaction cited has the characteristics of argumentation that Mrs. Hanson cites as typical disruptive behavior.

In this section, several instances of student behavior seen as problematic by their teacher were presented, such as being on the wrong page, giving incorrect and ludicrous answers or no answers at all, to relative simple questions asked in class or bickering and other disruptive behavior. The term, "zapped out" or "tuned out" was applied to such behavior by their teacher and the term was seen to apply predominantly to certain boys in the class. Those who earned the label "zapped out" were seen by their teacher as limited in ability and either unwilling or unable to achieve. In the following section several features of the classroom environment will be singled out and subsequent sections will explore the relationship between such features and the problematic behavior outlined above.

III. SOME FEATURES OF THE CLASSROOM

In order to make sense of the behavior in question, it will be useful to detail some of the regular features of the classroom in which such behavior occurs. These include dialect use, the central role of direct questioning, the use of "discussion" and the minimal role of oral participation in measuring success.

Black English

One of the most important aspects of how an inner-city classroom is conducted is how,what William Labov calls the Black English Vernacular (BEV), is dealt with. The use and management of BEV is important because of the social implications of its use or censure, as has been pointed out by much of the recent abundance of sociolinguistic literature. The prevailing attitude of both parents and school officials is that BEV use should be discouraged and Standard ENGLISH used for all speech, reading and writing. Mrs. Hanson sees it as her task to stamp out an improper and ungrammatical form of speech and she is "constantly after (her expressions) students to get them to speak correctly". The following excerpt from a conversation with Mrs. Hanson indicates her attitude toward her students' language use and her method of correction.

> "Roland is really something else though. He'll say something to you and you can repeat it back to him and ask if there's anything the matter with what he said and he'll say no, it sounds right to him."

For Mrs. Hanson, use of BEV is "wrong" and one of her methods of correcting it is to repeat the incorrect usage back to the student. The following field note is from the beginning of a review session for the California Achievement Test and shows how the teacher treats the children's speech in her lessons and her view of the source of the problem.

> "This is an area that we really need help in, Word Usage. We get so used to hearing bad English at home that it starts to sound right to us...Let's see if we can find the mistake in the following sentence, Carla?"

For Mrs. Hanson, the way children talk is "bad English" that is wrong but "sounds right" because it is so often used in the home. This point is further buttressed in a note collected during a lunchtime discussion with another fifth-grade teacher.

> She, (the other teacher) also commented on the problems that her students were having in composition. She said that the children "can't write sentences" and that they are "ungrammatical". She gave the following examples as typical errors. I seen him today, or by an accident. The teacher also stated that many times when a child would make such a mistake in speaking, she would repeatedly say, "What?" and that often it would be a while before the student would realize that he had made a mistake in speaking. Both teachers expressed frustration at the situation since the children would talk this way at home and their parents would speak this way as well, making it difficult to teach the children to speak "correctly".

It should be clear from the above that teachers see the language that children characteristically use as "incorrect", "ungrammatical" and "bad English". Further, these attitudes on the part of teachers are communicated to the children in the classroom through language lessons and on-the-spot correction. Teachers experience frustration at the persistence of the dialect in spite of all of their efforts to the contrary. They attribute this persistence to the fact that such incorrect and ungrammatical speech is routinely used for major portions of the student's life over which the teacher has no control. Black English is thus a stigmatized speech form that is constantly rejected and corrected by the classroom teacher as being inappropriate.

Classroom Interaction and Direct Questioning

Another important aspect of classroom interaction is how talk is managed in the classroom. In general, most talk by the children is initiated by the teacher and is usually in response to a direct question by the teacher. The field note below illustrates a typical didactic encounter.

Mrs. Hanson: Let's review what haiku is. What is it?
Student: The first line has....
Mrs. Hanson: I don't want to know what it's made up of, I want to know what it is.
Student: Haiku is Japanese poety.
Mrs. Hanson: Good. Now I want to know something about it that makes it different.
Student: It's broken up into syllables.
Mrs. Hanson: What do the Japanese usually write about?
Student: Nature.
Mrs. Hanson: What in nature?
Student: Trees.
Mrs. Hanson: What else?
Student: Birds.

Though not all that occurs in the classroom is structured like the above, the vast majority of what is taught employs the question-and-answer method.

Further, Mrs. Hanson generally allows only one person to speak at a time. Other children are forbidden to answer when a certain child has been called on. It is not uncommon for a child not to know an answer when he has been called on. In such instances, other children are often eager to answer, waving their hands wildly, wanting to be recognized. In many such instances, a child or many children will call out an answer. Usually such outbursts are met with statements such as, "Nobody talk, let him think," or "Nobody help her, let her say it". In general then, the classroom environment can be seen as a place where direct and specific questions are asked by the teacher and answered by the student who has been called on.

The Use of "Discussion"

Very closely related to the role of questions and the control of talk in the classroom is the use of discussion. For Mrs. Hanson, the word "discussion" seems to refer to a process not substantially different from the question-answer format reported above. Further, "discussion" is seen as a way of gauging student involvement in the lesson. These views are indicated in the following statement by Mrs. Hanson.

> "I use a lot of discussion to try to get kids involved. When I see the kids start to turn off, I'll ask question to try to get them involved."

We can gain further insight into the role of discussion from what follows. I reported to Mrs. Hanson the following excerpt from a taped conversation with five boys during lunchtime. One of the boys was talking about President Carter and Frank Rizzo and how they weren't doing anything for the people.

Harold: They picked the President, Jimmy Carter
He supposed to be helpin' us and all that.
He ain't doin' nothin'
I don't even think why they picked him for um President, and um,
Mayor Rizzo, Mayor Rizzo,
He ain't doin' nothin'
He ain't doin' nothin' but tryin' to be against the blacks and the whites.
He tryin' to be against everybody.

Duke: No Harold

Harold: I think the best President was oh um wait a minute Abraham Lincoln and um President Ford.

Jeffrey: Not because, not because he freed the slaves, that don't mean he's the best one

Duke: Abraham Lincoln he was earnest though, he was always earnest,
He never held anything back from his country if he wanted to let them know.
All he did was call the meetin' and the next day he made his announcement.
He never held nothin' back from the country.

Steven: He never told a lie like President Carter say,
Well, not gonna raise no taxes and all-a-that
People gonna be able to get jobs and people still havin' trouble gettin' jobs.

Jeffrey: When they campaign they always tell you stuff that they gonna do for re-election.
I heard that some people say alright you're gonna get a job and we ain't gonna no more tax or nothing, then when they get elected, they put all the high tax on y'know.

Milton: Hold it, we had to give Carter a chance because we didn't know what he was gonna do when he got to office.

Duke: We felt sorry for him when we voted for him. I did anyway because he looked all sad when he was sittin' up there in the stands and Gerald Ford was all happy and I said
Well, let's give this man a chance to see what he can do.

Upon reading over the above transcript, I realize that it disguises the true character of the above interaction. The discussion was a highly animated one and between statements there was a great deal of jockeying for the floor with several boys trying to talk at once. However, once someone had established his turn, the furor died down until the end of his statement.

When I read the above to Mrs. Hanson, her response was:

> "There's really not that much of a chance for that kind of talking in class. It's mostly responding to direct questions that I ask."

From the above it is clear that Mrs. Hanson recognizes the limited role that discussion in which children determine the topic and turn-taking rules plays in her classroom. The major way of discussing a topic involves questions addressed by the teacher to one child on a topic of the teacher's choice. This type of discussion also plays a large part in assessing children's involvement in the lesson. (It is assumed that if a child answers a question, he is involved and if he doesn't, he is not involved in the lesson.)

Success Through Written Work

One final, but very important, area of classroom operation and structure should be noticed. How is it that success or failure in the classroom is registered and evaluated? The major means of achieving success or failure in school is through written work. Standardized tests such as the Lippincott series or the Criterion Referenced Test are used to determine one's "track" or "level" in math and reading. Also, marks are given on the quality of one's day-to-day written work. Homework, which is always written, is a major factor in success at school. I once asked Mrs. Hanson how she goes about grading her children. She replied, "Usually it's twenty questions, five points each question." Also, she stated that each child must make minimum progress on reading and math testing to be promoted. I then asked her if class participation entered into the grading system. She stated that "it's taken into account mentally. If a child is between grades or something and they particpate a lot in class, I'll give them the higher grade."

Thus, those who are successful in school are those who are best able to perform at the day-to-day written tasks and on the standardized tests with classroom participation having only minimal impact on one's success in school. Further, any classroom participation by the student must take place in a system where the teacher controls the topic and asks direct questions. Such participation is used by the teacher as a means of assessing and increasing involvement in the lesson. Finally, all classroom interaction takes place in an environment where the way one normally speaks is seen as ungrammatical and incorrect. The importance and relevance of the above observations will become clear as the focus of the paper shifts in the following sections.

IV. THE SOCIAL WORLD OF THE BOYS

Let us now turn to the boys and their orientation to their social world, especially how they see school in relation to the rest of their environment.

One may wonder at the opposition between the rest of the environment and school. The distinction was suggested by the boys themselves and is revealed in the following tape recording of one of my first encounters with them.

Teddy: See that's the ghetto man.
Jim: Is that the ghetto?
All: Yeh.
Teddy: You know the ghetto William, you don't even know what the ghetto is.
Jim: You know what the ghetto is, huh?
All: Yeh.
Charles: A whole lotta niggers that don't take care a nothin'
Jim: Is that what the ghetto is?
Charles: Yeh, throw trash all around the place.
Jim: Is that what the ghetto is, is that what this is here?
All: No man, we ain't no ghetto
Teddy: This ain't the ghetto here.

Jim: Where's the ghetto?
All: Outside the school, outside the school.
Charles: A whole lotta big boys
Maurice: Big nuts
Teddy: Throw bottles all around in the schoolyard
Jim: You said niggers
All: Yeh
Jim: Is that what you call 'em?
Maurice: No, I wouldn't say it. They knock you out.
Teddy: No man, you be walkin' down the street (walks around the room) FWAM!

The above excerpt illustrates two points. First, the non-school environment that children live in is seen by them as hostile, dangerous and violent. Secondly, school is viewed as a separate entity from the rest of their environment, the ghetto, as if the ghetto ends at the entrance to the school. The former point will be dealt with presently. The latter point will be explored in the following section.

Non-School Environment

As indicated in the opening field note, one of the sources of environmental threat comes from other neighborhood boys. Often such fights center around the block and invasion of territory. Consider the following story which occured in the course of a discussion on gangs.

> "Around my neighborhood don't nobody mess with me because you know
> I got a lot of boys and stuff live on my block.
> Like one time around the corner from us the Haslins and them from down the street, they ganged on me when I was goin' to the mailbox for my mom and they ganged on me.
> All the big boys and stuff and they beat me up and then I went on my block when the boys was playin' basketball
> and I went and got them.
> Then they came back and started beatin' up them and it turned into a big fight
> and then it settled down for a while.
> and then they tried to gang on me again.
> This time I didn't have to get nobody.
> It was just them and myself.

Before looking at the implications of the above story, it should be realized that the issue is not whether the events recounted actually occurred, but to ascertain the concerns and ways of talking about the world that can be distilled from such accounts. This story exemplifies many of the themes or concerns voiced frequently by these boys. First, boys from the neighborhood or nearby blocks are liable to gang up on a boy from a different area. Thus, one must be capable of defending oneself should such a contingency arise. The teller represents himself as capable of so doing and it is perhaps for this reason that the story was told. Also, the story points out that one must have friends or allies one can turn to in times of trouble.

Neighborhood boys are not the only threats. Numerous accounts are told concerning attacks on them by whites. One such account follows:

Charles: We went up on Woodland Avenue, me, my cousin and
my folk's friend these these two white boys on bikes,
they said hey man, let's get 'em and then they start...

Jim: They said it to you?

Charles: Naw, one of the boys said it to the other boy.

Jim: And they were gonna get you?

Charles: Naw they were gonna beat all of us up and then they
rode past and they hit my friend and then they took
one of the boys, took off his belt and the other one
had a um plastic bat and then we started to run
we didn't, we picked up a rock and stuff and then we
started runnin' when we picked it up
and then they caught my cousin and then they hit him
in the head with buckle belt and with the bat and
then they ran
and then we got home.

This story is one of many telling of threats and violence perpetrated on these boys by whites. The theme of this story, and many others like it, is that of endurance in the face of adverse circumstances. Also, it should be noted that the teller of this narrative is the same boy who answered the question concerning the laws of our country with the reply, "You can't go past a red light." He is viewed by the teacher as one of the more "zapped out" and disruptive children in the class.

Such stories as presented above have at least some basis in fact, at least to the extent that one can trust the newspapers. Stories like the following appear regularly in the Philadelphia Tribune, a local newspaper chiefly reporting news of the black community:

> Marvin Moore, 11 years old and a sixth-grader at the Tilden Jr. High School, 66th and Elmwood Avenue in Southwest Philadelphia, was on his way to school early Friday morning when he and several other schoolmates were jumped by a gang of white youths. The other children ran and escaped the clutches of the older boys, but young Moore could not. He was caught by the neighborhood toughs and beaten about the head with a milk crate. Rushed to Children's Hospital Friday morning, he underwent surgery for possible brain damage.

The hostility of the environment reveals itself in children's dreams as reported by Teddy:

> "I had a nightmare that
> like I was um in this gang, right
> and I said I wanna quit
> and I quit, right
> and next thing I know
> all them mugs (guys) knockin' on my door
> No quittin' man."

Parents paint a similar picture in their views about the neighborhood. Contrary to some versions of popular opinion, most parents do not see their neighborhood as a place where everyone knows everyone else and everyone looks out for everyone else. The following assessment by Harold's mother illustrates the point nicely:

> "I don't know all the neighbors here, but I do know some of them. But it's not the kind of place where everyone knows everyone or looks out for everyone else. It's not like South Philly where I used to live where everyone knew everybody else and someone might come up to you and say, 'aren't you so and so' and I'd say 'how did you know'. Of course West Philly has never been like that for as long as I can remember. Even when my mother used to live (in another section of West Philadelphia) it used to be like that."

Another parent paints a similar, but less isolated picture of neighborhood life.

> "Yeh, I know most of the people that live around here. It would be hard for me to get by without their help sometimes. Ingrid goes over to Baker's house after school a lot of times when I'm not home. Most of the people around here keep a pretty tight rein on their kids. I'd say that they're pretty strict. They like to know where their kids are at all times.

Parents' response to the neighborhood situation is indicated by the previous passage. They tend to keep close tabs on their children. Some parents do not allow their children outside unless they are home. That way there will be someone who can be notified in case something should happen. Often parents do not allow their child to range more than a block from home.

From the above it can be seen that both children and parents alike perceive their environment as a hostile one, one to be endured. The sources of threat are many. Neighborhood gangs limit safe areas of passage. Whites from nearby neighborhoods are a persistent threat. In general, safety cannot be assumed beyond a block's radium from home. Parents are nervous and keep close tabs on their whereabouts, keeping them inside when they're not home.

School Environment: "Being Educational"

The children themselves introduced a relevant concept during one of our many "interview" sessions. This is the notion of "being educational" and its meaning will become clear as the children define it themselves below. I was trying to get acquainted with about seven of the children, and was asking some questions about such innocuous topics as where the children live or the kinds of things they like to do:

Jim: What's your favorite pasttime?

Milton: What's that?

Jim: That's like, uh, what do you like to do?
do you like sports or what do you like?

Other: Your hobby

Jim: Yeh, your hobby

Other: He like to be a midget (Milton is the shortest in the class)

Other: Shhhh stop it
(pause)

Milton: Grasshopper (background talking)

Jim: You like grasshoppers? (bachground talking)

Steven: I like water bugs. (background talking, laughter)

Carla: Why don't y'all stop it and start actin' educational?

JIM: Start actin' educational, you guys. OK I want everybody
to act educational. OK ready?

Others: OK

The next five or so seconds of the tape recorded complete silence except for the sound of children straightening up in their chairs and stomping their two feet to the floor. All lips were sealed and most children had folded their hands and placed them in their laps.

Intrigued by the response I had gotten, I asked the following question later in the interview:

Jim: Listen, I want each person just to say one
thing about, and we'll take turns OK.
What you have to do to be educational, OK?
What you have to do to be educational.

Some of the responses are reported below:

Carla: To be educational, be serious, be willing to do things,
be willing to do things that you don't like and you'll
still have to do 'em no matter.

Milton: You have to follow directions, listen to the teacher
when she talkin'
learn how to read and write
fill out applications

Jim: Who told you that?

Milton: My mother

Jim: She told you that's what you have to do?
She give sample applications and let me
fill it out.

Steven: You have to be able to read, learn math,
listen to your teacher, pay attention.

Jim: Can you talk?

Steven: Talk in class? You can talk in the class
when the teacher's not talking and you
raise your hand

Rose: You have to have good English and don't be
sayin' ain't like I say ain't.

Jim: You gotta have good English

Rose: and even if you don't know how to do stuff
you either tell the teacher or you have to
try to do it yourself but just don't sit
there like you don't know nothin' to do at all.

Jim: Can you ask somebody else in the class?

Rose: If you ask the teacher could you ask 'em.
If you don't, then the teacher, she might,
you might get in trouble and have a detention
on Thursday.

From the above examples of what it takes to be "educational", it is quite clear that the children quoted above have been socialized to the point of being able to verbalize what it takes to make it in school. These children are aware that success in school depends on the learning of both cognitive and social skills. Children realize that they must learn how to read, write and do math. In addition, they must learn to do things they don't like to do, be serious, follow directions, pay attention, listen to the teacher, raise their hand to talk, only ask the teacher, not other students, for help and don't sit at their desk looking like they're not doing anything. It strikes me immediately that if a student is not doing a number of these behaviors mentioned above, he will qualify for the "zapped out" category. "Zapped out" kids are those who are sitting at their desks looking like they don't know what to do, or who don't pay attention or follow directions, or who talk when the teacher is talking.

Also particularly interesting was Rose's remark that one must learn not "to be saying ain't like I say ain't". This statement carries the twofold message that she is aware that she must learn "good" English and that the brand of English she normally or characteristically uses is "bad". Thus, Mrs. Hanson's attitudes toward language as outlined earlier have been communicated to the children. Further, the children interviewed above are aware that those who, for whatever reason, do not accommodate themselves to the system are headed for trouble.

Milton's comment that, in addition to learning to read and write, learning to "fill out applications" are important points to another fertile area of inquiry. What do children see their education as good for? What will it get them?

A number of the children who helped to define "educational", expressed an interest in going to college and see their education as one necessary step to that goal. However, of the eight boys that I spent the most time with, only one mentioned an interest in attending college. Others expressed interest in joining the Army or Navy, being a stunt car driver, owning a small business or being a pilot.

These sentiments are summed up well by Duke:

"When I get grown I'd like to marry Linda
and have three children
and when I get married I'll be twenty
years old
and um I like to live in Delaware and
um

Jim: Why Delaware?

Duke: Got land down there
I mean the suburbs really
and um I hope I never have to get a
divorce and hope I have a good marriage

Jim: I hope you do too
You didn't say what you're gonna do
when you get grown

Duke: I just got through sayin' it
(laugh)

Steven: Are you gonna go into the Army?

Duke: Oh, when I get grown
I wouldn't like to go to college
cause I think I might miss my children
and I would like to go
just go down to a job course
and check out, what kind of job I would
like to have
But I really don't know what kind of job
I'd like to have
So you know
I might just turn out to be a paper man
you know.

For Milton, one of the major functions of education is to acquire the skills necessary to "fill out applications". Recall the incident cited earlier in which Teddy defended himself against allegations that he had filled out the Sports Illustrated subscription form incorrectly, saying, "Man, I know how to fill out applications". Clearly, a common concern among these boys is with the acquisition of skills necessary for obtaining employment.

Most of the boys however, either have or are close to having such skills already, and graduation from high school is certainly not required. It is at this point that the second reason for attending and finishing school comes in. Although one may be qualified skillwise to hold a job, most positions require at least a high school diploma. Boys recognize that finishing school is an admission ticket to a job or, at least, as an admission ticket to the waiting line for a job. This point is acknowledged by David when he says, "You know a lot of boys quit school but they're dumb and they get out there and can't get no job".

Thus, the boys are preoccupied with getting the skills necessary for obtaining employment and are not interested in the acquisition of academic skills for their own sake. Most are close to having all the skills they need to read those books, periodicals, etc. that interest them and to secure and hold a job. However, the boys are also aware of the legitimation to hold a job which comes with the completion of high school. Faced with the prospect of having to spend several seemingly unnecessary years in school, the educational process can become an endurance test. If the student can stick it out, he can get the diploma and what it entitles him to. Such feelings are conveyed in quotes like the following:

Harold: When I'm out of school I like it but when I'm in school I can't stand it.

Teddy: I wish I never came to this school.

Jim: Why not?

Teddy: We have to do all this work but the kids at Anderson, they don't have to do nothin'

Thus, for some, school becomes something to endure, not to excel at.

V. WRITTEN AND ORAL ABILITIES IN RELATION TO STATUS AND IDENTITIES

Inner city children live in an environment where hostility and endurance are omnipresent and recurrent themes. Further, entry into the broader society, where ambitions may be fulfilled and status and recognition won, has traditionally been denied inner city residents. Education has been heralded as the avenue for inner city residents to satisfy such needs. However, many children experience the educational process as one to be endured, rather than as an opportunity for mobility. Status avenues are open to such residents if and only if accommodation is made by the children to the cultural norms of the educational system, which are predominantly middle class. If a child is to succeed and gain status and recognition through school, he must do so using the written channel, as this is what is valued by the dominant educational system.

Thomas Kochman points out, however, that in black culture status and recognition are vested in oral expertise:

> "The prestige norms within the culture of the Black inner city child place a high premium on the ability to use words. The channel through which this ability is promoted and developed and through which recognition is given is oral/aural ... The prestige attached to men of words (preachers, storytellers, tellers of toasts, jokes, signifiers, dozens players, etc.) within the black community is unrivaled. A rich and colorful oral tradition is an integral part of the black cultural aesthetic." (Kochman, 1969, 89)

In what follows, the relevance of Kochman's observation on the importance of oral expertise to prestige issues will be demonstrated with respect to the boys worked with. Several examples of typical speech by the boys will be presented. Such examples come from tape-recorded interviews, and other contexts outside the classroom. Specific attention will be paid to certain traditionally recognized "genres" that the boys employ in their speech. It will be shown that the boys are proficient users of the genres specifically, and of oral language generally. Also, attention will be paid to the relationship between proficiency of language use and status concerns.

Bustin'. The first genre to be considered is referred to as bustin' by the boys. Bustin' is very similar to "sounding" as described by Labov (Labov 1973: 297) and others. (Kochmann 1969: 145) Bustin' is a frequently used speech form using ritualized insults and bustin' ability as a means of attaining and affirming status in interaction. Consider the following excerpt of a lunchtime conversation:

Charles:	Yeah, don't even start bustin' man cause you know you man anybody can get bustin' on you man
Jim:	Let's see it, let's hear it
Charles:	Alright um
Teddy:	Let's bus on Shelton
Jim:	Terrance and Ernest

Charles: Terrance so big
I don't think he could fit through my door
Terrance said if you see me
say I know you
I say I can't miss you
When we went to the Franklin Institute
Terrance was eatin' a whole lot

Roland and Charles: (both boys were competing for the floor
almost shouting the various items that Terrance
had consumed...three Big Macs, large fries,
etc...This shouting was so loud I had to
interrupt)

Jim: Hey, Ernest is talkin

Charles: First he was like this ...
and then after he got finished
he was tryin to hold that chump (stomach)
in there

Teddy: Shelton you can't talk because when we was
at the Phillies game you was bummin' back
wasn't he Gary

Charles: He had no money

Roland: I had money at the Phillies game
I was askin you for a piece of that hoagie

Teddy: That's right, that's bummin'

Steven: You know what? Shelton came to my house,
he said Mr. Williams
can I have some grit
Yeah, we country niggers like grit.

Steven's remark and Roland's silence was followed by a veritable onslaught against Roland including the following:

Charles: Everytime somebody say they didn't do somethin' Shelton say,
Yeah you did, yeah you did

Teddy: You got a pancake head, Shelton

Steven: You know what, Shelton head look like
Mt. Olympus

Teddy: Shelton, you better stop eatin that
cat litter.

From the above, it can be seen how bustin' works to increase or decrease one's status or standing through verbal ability. First, Charles challenges Terrance to bust. Teddy, unwilling to match his wits against Charles, suggests bustin' on Roland. I suggest that Charles' challenge be honored. Charles then busts on Teddy's size. When Teddy doesn't respond, Charles twists the knife with another bust on his size and one on his appetite. Charles clearly establishes his verbal superiority over Teddy through challenging him and then successfully bustin' on Teddy without Teddy responsing. In order to save face, Teddy turns on Roland. However, Teddy's comments are more of the character of accusatory arguments rather than insult. Roland tries to defend himself, but his defense is weak and Teddy wins the argument when Roland can't refute Teddy's assertion that Roland was "bummin'". Steven joins the assault on Roland with a more traditional bust on Roland's rural background. Again Roland sits silently. The interaction cited above shows whose verbal ability is greater with respect to bustin' and how such ability is measured. Charles proved his superiority over Teddy by challenging him and by Teddy's failure to respond. Instead Teddy picked on Roland who he saw as more vulnerable. Steven also demonstrated his superiority over Roland, again due to Roland's silence.

Steven's bustin' ability is extremely high, and I have not seen him topped yet. Below in a classic contest, Steven tops Harold.

Harold: Go home with your yellow socks
Steven: Go home with your yellow teeth
Harold: Go home with your rotten teeth
Steven: Go home with your Dr. J. Bo-Bo's
Steven: He go warm-up Jeepers

Steven again asserts his dominance by having at hand more bustin' comments than his opponent, reducing him to silence and then adding another comment for good measure.

Another way of evaluating verbal ability is by the amount of laughter a bust gets. This one by Steven below got a roaring response and is indicative of his ability. It occurred during the session reported previously during which Roland was ganged up on verbally because of his silence.

Teddy: Hey Shelton, don't your pop be readin' them nasty books
Roland: No
Harold: No but his mom do
Teddy: (soberly) Hey, his mom not living man
(pause)
Roland: Satisfied about tha ...
Steven: But his breath livin'
(laughter)
Teddy: You can smell that chump a mile away

Steven's comment about Roland's breath strikes me as particularly inventive, and illustrates another way of registering verbal ability. The other boys approval is registered by the laughter which followed the remark. The more the laughter the better the bust.

Often bustin' can lead to arguments where one must be able to defend oneself verbally. In what follows, Steven busts on Roland about his manner of speaking. However, the content of the bust reflects badly on Charles and Charles feels he must defend himself.

Steven: You know what
The first day of school Roland came here
he said, "Hey Charles, can I ride your
Big Wheel"
Charles: Man you never seen me ride no Big Wheel
What you bring that up for?
Roland: Man I know you did
You had that Green Machine coming down that
day
Charles: Oh yeah that's right
When I was real little
I had a Green Machine and shit
Teddy: (laughter) Shelton you got a pancake head

In the above Charles takes offense at Steven's bust. Roland pursues the point. Charles is forced to admit that he rode something, but counters that it was not a Big Wheel but a Green Machine, and more importantly, it was when he was little. Having successfully defended himself, bustin' activity returned to Roland.

Storytelling. Bustin' can be seen as one genre of many that speakers use to display verbal ability and thereby gain valued status and recognition. Another such genre is storytelling or narrative. Some examples of such stories appear at different points in the paper. More examples will be provided below. Usually stories are told to make a point, get others to laugh and/or to be in awe, and many are very effective. One of the most common points or themes concerns the teller's or someone else's fighting ability. An example of one such story told by Teddy appears below:

Teddy: Where I used to live at right
like they was my friends right
and like they was playin' a big joke
like I had my bike in the hallway right
and they stole it right
and they used to always be pickin' on me right
Other: Right
Teddy: And then so I seen em ridin my bike right

Teddy: and I took my bike in and they chased me home
and then I was fightin' every last one of em
and then they all double teamed me
and I picked up a pipe and I WAILED.
Other: (Laughter)
Maurice: Tell em bout your brother
that thing your brother did
hit that boy in the head with that pipe
Teddy: Oh yeah
my little brother
he's a trip
you mess with him
and you might notsee tomorrow
cause he'll throw anything at you
wouldn't he Maurice
Maurice: Yep
Teddy: cause Maurice was messin with him
He threw a brick and a bottle at William
Maurice: He tried to but I hauled

It should be obvious from the above that Teddy is an extremely skilled storyteller. Thus although Teddy is not as good at bustin' as either Charles or Steven, his storytelling ability stands out.

On the other hand, while Steven is very talented at bustin', his storytelling abilities are not as well developed. Consider his story in response to the "Danger of Death" question developed by William Labov. The question is "Was there ever a time when you thought you were going to die --when you said to yourself this is it? --What happened?"

Steven: I thought I was gonna die
when I found this puppy right
and see that right there (a mark on his arm)
and he bit me
and I thought oh-oh
I remember when the SPCA guy came at our
school and he said the dog might have
rabies
I was ridin my bike out fast and stuff
goin to the store ...

This story is interrupted by one told by Charles

Charles: I thought I was gon die
I had a dream and um
I went to Great Adventure (amusement park)
and that big sliding board that come down?
(yeh)
and I jumped up
and I came all the way down

Charles: and I went AHHH (loud)
and I woke up
and I fell out my bed
(laughter)

Note that Steven's story lacks much of the dramatic impact and flair that Teddy's and Charles' stories had. Also, Steven's story is cut off before completion, an indication that it is not effective. This story of Charles' generates another story by Steven, this one a dream story as well:

I had a dream
like Cobbs Creek park was real water(y)
So I was on a kinda like black lion
and I jumped on it
and it took me all the way across the sea
and I was coming down
almost but this rock
then I woke up in my dream in my bed
and I got up and started runnin
(David was the only one to laugh)

Charles then tells another dream story:

I had a dream last night that my mom
came home with a new car
and um she went over my aunt house
and she opened up the door
and somebody was upstairs and that
sayin MUH, MUH, MUH
and it was a monster
(laughter) and he was eatin up my cousin
and then my mom ran out
and then her friend up the street
named Peanut was fightin some
boy with some choco sticks
real fightin
then my mom said O my God
and then she started runnin out there
and I fell in some mud
and I started running
then I woke up
(pause)
I thought a monster named MUH was gonna get me
He kept on sayin MUH MUH
(pause)
No matter how you locked yourself up in the room
he managed to get in there.

The last line generates a lot of laughter. In listening to Charles' story one gets the sense that towards the middle of the story he is floundering and becoming disorganized. He goes from talking about the monster to talking about his mother's friend, to falling in the mud. He then states "and then I woke up." It is at this point that the two previous dream stories end and Charles probably intends to end there, since he pauses at the end of that line. Perhaps sensing that the story as told so far would flop, the last three lines can be seen as attempts to salvage the story. His third attempt is highly successful, judging by the amount of laughter, and is indicative of his verbal dexterity.

What follows is a story told by Roland demonstrating his less developed story telling ability. Throughout the story others are talking and at one point he is booed by Steven. Also, just as in Charles' story Roland finds himself at an unnatural ending place and tries to save the story. However, he is less successful than Charles was.

Roland: I was in the airplane
in World um
pretending we was (Steven: OHHH Boy)
in the war World War II (Charles is talking in the background
I was in the airplane
I was up there
and the man say Roland get on um
get out there and try to shoot those airplanes
so I sat out there next time you know
Ahhh! Boom! right in the water
I was dead (Steven: Booo, Booo)
I said I thought I was gonna die
Then the next thing I woke up
I was on the floor
Jim: Hmm
Steven: I dream, I dream,
Roland: With a big hickey (bump) on my head
Steven: I dreamed, I dreamed I was at ....

As I was saying, "Hmmm", Harold was trying to begin the next story. No one laughs at Roland's story. Roland adds a line that he feels will intensify the ending, but it is too late, as Harold persists beginning the story he had tried to start before Roland's unsuccessful salvage attempt.

If space would permit, I should like to print more such stories. However, enough have been printed to document the essential points. Story telling is a common and valued genre of communication developed to various levels of skill by various boys in the class. Further, good story tellers command a good deal of respect and prestige, while bad story tellers suffer status-wise. Teddy is perhaps the best at this skill, followed by Charles, Steven, and Roland.

Word Use

One other area of verbal ability is particularly manifested by Charles and that is a highly developed sensitivity to the intricacies of word use. Recall the story presented earlier in which Charles told of an attack on friends and him by some white boys. The introduction to the story went as follows:

Charles:	We went up on Woodland Avenue me, my cousin and my folk's friend, and these two white boys on bikes they said hey man let's get 'em and then they start. . .
Jim:	They said it to you?
Charles:	Naw, one of the boys said it to the other boy.
Jim:	And they were gonna get you?
Charles:	Naw, they were gonna get all of us up and then....

Charles reported that the white boys had said, "let's get 'em". I was curious to know if the "'em" of the white boys was meant to be Charles and his friends, or some other group. Thus I asked Charles, "They said it to you (as opposed to some other group)?" He interpreted my remark extremely literally replying as if I were inquiring as to the person to whom the remark was addressed and not the group to which it was addressed: "Naw, one of the boys said it to the other boy". Still wishing to know who the "'em" referred to, I redirected my question, saying, "And they were gonna get you (as opposed to someone else). This time Charles interpreted the "you" of my question to mean "just you or you and your friends", (2nd person singular versus 2nd person plural) and he answered, "Naw, they were gonna get all of us". This incident may seem trivial but its import will be shown to have implications for the classroom. At any rate, it can be seen that Charles' ear for language is very finely tuned.

These are those of the many verbal genres of speech commonly used by the boys I worked with most closely. They show that oral ability at these forms is intimately linked to status and identity issues for these boys. It would not be too much of an oversimplification to state that, for the boys in question, an opportunity to speak is an opportunity to increase, reaffirm or lose status in an environment where it is very hard to come by. Status battles must be fought day in and day out, and cumulative score is kept. Well formed and delivered stories and busts are listened to, not interrupted, and reacted to with appropriate awe or laughter, the very currency of status. Badly conceived and articulated verbal attempts are ignored, interrupted or booed, and esteem suffers accordingly.

Thus, for the boys in question, oral expertise is an extremely important barometer of status and identity. However, these same boys are immersed in an educational environment in which the written mode is the predominant one for evaluation of achievement. The implications of the above observations for the analysis of classroom interaction cannot be underestimated.

VI. CONCLUSION: TWO KINDS OF RATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Having provided some sense of both the teacher's and the child's perceptive on the school situation, we are now in a better position to assess and address the problem posed at the beginning of the paper. Teachers' and children's behavior will be seen to be rational responses to the situations they find themselves in.

It was shown that teachers do not permit use of BEV in the classroom, and are on a constant crusade to stamp it out. This behavior is sensible because the teacher recognizes that in addition to cognitive skills, the acquisition of social skills such as speaking Standard English, is necessary for the entrance of minority children into the broader society where status and recognition may be won. This is how she and most of us were taught, and as a result, she was able to succeed in school, attend college and secure a teaching job. Further, a "mythology of educational psychology" (Labov 1972: 2ol) in the educational literature has reinforced the notion that Black dialect is a cognitively inferior means of expression which should be stamped out. Also, many of the children in the class have accomodated themselves to the traditional educational ideology, are succeeding in school, and work hard at correcting their speech. It's only a few who are incapable or unwilling to accommodate to the system.

The asking of direct questions, with all interaction controlled by and going through the teacher also had a logical end. Such a set-up provides a means of gauging the involvement of the students in the lesson and how well they understand what's going on. Further, the logistics of directing a class of some thirty to forty students almost requires that standardized, orderly patterns of interaction be established. The asking of direct questions also provides a way of maintaining a sense of self-worth in the face of student failure. If, after spending a half hour trying to teach something, a student is discovered to be on the wrong page or unable to even tell what the lesson was about, the teacher can know that at least she tried and that at least some students were able to answer correctly.

The other common feature of the classroom dealt with here, the prevalence of written work in the determination of student success, also can be seen as rational. Again the issue of logistics and efficiency surface. Standardized tests are recognized not to be entirely fair. However, they are easy to administer, comparable across wide samples, provide a ranking or score and are a document that can be filed, xeroxed or distributed. To a lesser extent, the same can be said of written tests and papers assigned by the teacher. In addition, evaluation through written means has precedent, as this is how achievement and success in school have been traditionally evaluated.

From the children's point of view, it must be realized that children come from an environment that is viewed as hostile and where endurance is a persistent theme. For most, the school is recognized as a place where one must accommodate oneself to the existing system, a place that is fundamentally different from the neighborhood that they live in. For the boys under scrutiny, school is something to endure, not to excel at. Most either have or are close to having all the skills they'll need for a job. All the diploma can get them is the legitimization that comes with finishing high school.

Especially for men, status and recognition are gained through oral ability. It has been shown that these boys possess and command considerable verbal skills. However, given the structure of the classroom situation in which they find themselves as recapitulated above, there is no opportunity to display that ability that is consistent with or contributes to success in school.

There is no way they can incorporate positively the things that they do best, and which contribute to their feelings of self-worth, into the school setting. Oral participation in class enters into evaluation only "mentally", and even then must be in the "correct" code in response to a direct question.

It would seem that the only way to generate positive feelings of self-worth in school, given the above constraints, would be through behavior seen as deviant by the teacher. This brings us back to the problem that Mrs. Hanson sees in her classroom. (Much of the behavior that was cast by Mrs. Hanson as "zapped out" and indicative of incompetence can be seen to be boys' ways of making the school situation more "endurable" and providing for opportunities for status and recognition through the use of verbal abilities.) Recall the incident in which a passage was read about Christopher Columbus and the year in which such events occurred was asked. Children gave responses which shocked the teacher and struck the reader as ludicrous. Steven provides a boy's view of a similar incident:

> "I swear some of these boys play dumb. The other day the teacher asked us to write about somebody who was alive in our time and some of them said they'd write about Christopher Columbus. I couldn't believe it because they know he ain't livin'. They just did it to be funny."

In some sense, the boys are "playing dumb" and putting the teacher on. This explanation renders Charles' telling the teacher the wrong page when he was actually on the right page, an obvious "put on". Recall that one of the means of achieving status through verbal means is by getting others to laugh. Such a gag served the purpose admirably.

Perhaps the clearest illustration comes from an example cited by Mrs. Hanson after I made her aware of my suspicions. This incident involves Charles. In the last section I showed how Charles is particularly sensitive to the intricacies of word use by analyzing how he dealt with my questions at the beginning of his narrative about being attacked by whites, and how he interpreted them very literally. The following incident involves the same sensitivity:

> "Today we were doing a thing with maps and all you had to do was copy all the states that were colored green into

> one column and all the states of another color into another and there was Charles with his book closed just looking around. I asked him why he wasn't doing his work. He replied, "I was doing it." I said, "Charles, you're not doing your work. I'm looking right at you and you don't even have your book in front of you." His reply was, "Oh, I said I was doing my work. I didn't say I was doing it when you asked me." The whole class broke up at that one and Charles laughed right along with them.

The same analysis can be applied to Charles' response to Mrs. Hanson's question, "What do we have for our laws today?" to which Charles replied, "You can't go past a red light." Charles' response was appropriate given a literal interpretation of the words. However, such an interpretation contributes to Mrs. Hanson's view of him as "zapped out". The incidents cited above reveal two things quite clearly. Charles is a bright kid with a good sense of humor. Further, he knows exactly what irritates Mrs. Hanson, and is not afraid of so doing. However, there are other implications which are not so clear. Recall that Mrs. Hanson sees Charles as a liar. Had Charles not added his class-shattering remark after "I was doing my work" could not the preceding incident be seen as one more instance of Charles' lying? Is it possible that such hypothetical instances have occurred in the past enough to result in Mrs. Hanson's perception of him as a liar?

Incidents like these in combination with the disruptive behavior that commonly occurs raise other interesting questions. Mrs. Hanson, when asking a question of her class, assumes that if a child can answer a question correctly, he will in fact answer it correctly. Thus, those who don't answer the questions correctly, can't, and earn labels such as "zapped out". Implicit in this assumption is another: that all children want to please the teacher, that pleasing the teacher (answering correctly) is an important motivating force. However, there are at least three reasons for doubting this assumption, as shown by the analysis. First, children's normal way of answering such questions is stigmatized. Secondly, the ways that children show their verbal ability is not allowed in the question-answer format. In fact, such direct questions may be culturally alien as suggested by Heath (Heath, 1979). Also, correct answers to such questions are relatively unimportant to a child's success in school, as written work has been shown to play the primary role. Perhaps these children don't care that they are seen by the teacher as a liar, or "zapped out" or disruptive.

A similar analysis can be applied to the disruptive behavior that Mrs. Hanson sees as problematic. She sees such behavior as rooted in petty arguments. Recall the field note reported earlier which detailed the children's behavior in class. Most behavior involved issues of status such as who had whose phone number, who could fill out an application, or what a boy would be called. Also involved was some "bustin'" behavior. This behavior makes sense, given the alternatives available for the achievement of status and self-worth. Children live in an environment where status is in short supply and high demand. Approved school activities do not allow for success and recognition using oral/verbal ability. Thus, such recognition and status are gained outside of officially sanctioned activity to the point where they actually infringe on it.

Up to this point it has been demonstrated that, while both parties can be performing sensibly and rationally, unsatisfactory behavior patterns can emerge. To take the analysis one final step further, I would like to trace how, once such patterns are established, both parties will act so as to maintain the existing social order.

Mrs. Hanson and I began to discuss some possible ways that these boys could get to use their verbal abilities in school and gain recognition for so doing. One suggestion was to have them perform in plays. Mrs. Hanson commented:

> "we have plays in school already. In fact our music teacher has just written a beautiful play that ties in with our social studies. However, the leading parts in these plays will go to the Lindas and the Roberts and not the Charles' and Teddy's. You're afraid that they'll get up there and say something like 'I ain't got no pencil' or 'You can't go past a red light'."

Thus, the unsuccessful and "zapped out" children are systematically excluded from the parts and activities that they might see as prestigious and which would allow them to use some of their abilities in school-approved pursuits.

Such parts go to those who have already demonstrated their success and ability to accommodate to the system.

While these boys may not be eligible to take part in plays and other prestigious activities, they tend to frustrate teachers' attempts to let them prove themselves worthy of such a privilege and responsibility.

> "I wouldn't trust Charles or Teddy in a play or something like that, but I realized that they really weren't getting a chance to participate in anything. One day Mrs. Horner called up and asked me if I could spare about thre or four boys to help her move something. I thought this would be a good chance to let them do something for a change so I sent them down. Mrs. Horner called back later and said it was alright that I couldn't spare anyone and that she had gotten someone else to move the stuff. I was shocked and told her I had sent them down. Mr. Poinsett found them running the halls."

Thus, the teacher's sense that the boys in questions are not deserving of special privileges is validated and the status quo is maintained.

This paper has been an attempt to show that behaviors regarded as problematic by a classroom teacher can be rendered sensible when information from other contexts and points of view is provided. It was shown that such behavior maximizes feelings of self-worth and status given other alternatives available to the boys in question. It was also demonstrated how once such behavior patterns become established, reinforcing behavior patterns maintain the status quo.

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(F)

SPAULDING SCHOOL: ATTENTION AND STYLES OF INTERACTION

Linda May

PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION

II. CLASSROOMS (1): WITH FOCUS ON THE TEACHER'S ROLE 3
- (A) The two teachers 3
- (B) What counts as attention 6
  - Calling for attention 6
  - Evidence of attention 10
  - Summary 16
- (C) Degrees of attention 16
  - Activities 16
  - Teaching styles 25
  - Summary 28
- (D) Selectively noticed attention 30
  - The child 30
  - The behavior 32
- (E) Group attention 37
- (F) General summary 42

III. CLASSROOMS (2): WITH FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S INTERACTION 44
- (A) Mock challenge and response 44
- (B) A description 50
- (C) Consequences for attention: "How can you be doing your work when you're talking that foolish talk?" 59

IV. COMMUNITY 69
- (A) The neighborhood 69
- (B) Mock adversary exchanges 74
- (C) Teasing 76
- (D) Oral, collaborative dimensions of attention to reading and writing in the community 83

INTRODUCTION

To focus my research at the beginning of this project, I asked the teachers what problems they have in their classrooms. They told me, among other things, that the children "don't pay attention", and that this has consequences for teaching and for learning. Sitting in the classroom, I saw that the teachers do, indeed, spend a great deal of time and energy managing the attention behavior of their students. I hoped to discover what counts as attention for these two teachers and to relate it to what counts as attention for the children as an aid to dealing with the problem. The longer I was there, however, the more things I realized I would have to first find out.

As with other behavioral phenomena, an observer has several aspects to consider:

--what people can report as to what they count as attention;

--what observation suggests may be counted as attention in practice;

--differences among people (here, teachers and children) in both respects.

A variety of differences in background can lead to discrepancies between what is counted as attention and whether or not attention is actually being paid. In principle, there might be cases of four kinds:

	Counted as attention	Not counted
Attention paid	1	2
Attention not paid	3	4

In cases of kinds (1) and (4), what occurs and what is counted as occurring coincides. In cases of kinds (2) and (3), a child may be paying attention, but in a way that is not counted as such (2), or a child may not be paying attention, but the fact not be noticed or counted as such (3). As will be seen, teachers are aware of both of these possibilities. They may turn to evidence other than their own observation to infer lack of attention (3). Teachers seem less aware of the possibility that a pattern of interaction among children that may seem to involve lack of attention, in fact may not (see Section II).

It should be clear that this research does not address the question of what might be meant by attention in general, as a result of philosophical analysis or psychological experimentation. The research starts with a phenomenon which members of the culture of the classroom, teachers, name and can discuss in some detail and complements their concern with additional systematic observation. There is no doubt about the reality of the category in the culture of these classrooms.

The work is the result of a year's observation in two sixth-grade classrooms in an inner-city elementary school in West Philadelphia and in the black neighborhood around the school. Spaulding School (pseudonyms are used for all people and places) was built in 1905 and many of the children who go there have parents and grandparents who went to the school. The children, all of whom are black, live within a four by eight square block area of mostly low income families. About forty percent of the children at the school qualify for Title I assistance (reading aides, counsellors, special programs, etc.) which means that they scored below the fiftieth percentile on the standardized test that is used to determine Title I eligibility.

I spent the first part of the year in the classrooms of two black sixth-grade teachers and in other school settings such as the playground, the art room and the halls. The second part of the year the teachers and I selected six children whose parents agreed for me to observe at home and in other community settings. I tried to be with the children in a range of settings. For example, I ate dinner in their homes, went to Girl Scout meetings with them, took them to movies and to the roller skating rink, attended church with their families. I attended community meetings, and in an unexpected development, I found myself marching with parents and testifying at a school board hearing when the Philadelphia School Board threatened to shut the school (along with nine others) because the building is not fire-resistant and because the school's enrollment is dropping. The Board eventually found the money to keep eight of the schools open, including Spaulding. During this community phase of the research, I continued to attend class occasionally and continued to talk with the teachers so they could help me put my observations into perspective.

Section II of this report examines the teachers' methods of inferring attention and looks at some of the contextual features that make a difference in what counts as attention for the teachers: the teachers themselves, the individual child, the activity to which the child should be paying attention and the difference between group attention and individual attention. That section also examines the difference between what the teachers perceive as inattention and what they choose to publicly notice. Section III looks in more detail at a pattern of interaction that the children bring into the classroom--a pattern of mock adversary challenges and responses--with regard to its consequences for attention in the classroom. Section IV is a brief look at this pattern of mock adversary challenges and responses in its community context.

II. THE CLASSROOMS (1): WITH FOCUS ON THE TEACHER'S ROLE

(A) The Two Teachers

Mrs. Barnes is a 38-year old black woman with rows and rows of shoulder length corn row braids. She often wears an armful of thin silver bracelets and lots of gold and silver chain necklaces. Her ears are pierced three times and she wears a pair of big loops and two smaller pairs of earrings. She has been teaching seventeen years, eight of them at Spaulding. She grew up in the neighborhood around Spaulding and she and her husband live in the house where she grew up, a few blocks from Spaulding School.

She believes that children should learn to express their feelings and gives them opportunity to try; they keep private journals and each week they have a "Magic Circle", a time when she and they share personal feelings. When she introduced me to the class for the first time and I explained to them what I would be doing, she got the children started talking about how they felt about the idea of being observed.

Her classes are usually noisier than other classes on that floor. (I don't believe that noise is the antithesis of learning.") The first day I observed her class, she told me, "There's always a little buzz. I think that's how they learn to communicate with each other". I heard complete silence in her classroom only a handful of times, once when the children were lying on the floor meditating, a technique she uses to calm everyone down after recess.

Mrs. Lindley is a 51-year old black woman who dresses more traditionally and teaches more traditionally. She is concerned that her children learn "what's right and what's wrong", and she often talks to them about people such as famous black scientists and baseball players whom she thinks will encourage and inspire them. She has been teaching twenty-nine years, sixteen of them at Spaulding. She cares a great deal about those of her children whom she thinks work hard and try to do what's right. Through the years she has sponsored a number of clubs for the children, such as Newspaper Club and Service Girls Club. She goes to a lot of trouble to make sixth-grade graduation special for the children, helping plan dinner dances or Broadway shows or other special treats.

Her classes are quieter than are Mrs. Barnes'. As she told me:

> (Mrs. Barnes) and I are different. She can stand a lot of noise. She can tune out a lot. She just tunes some of it out. But I hear everything. I don't want to hear a lot of noise and foolish talking, because I can't stand it. I just refuse to tolerate it.

These teachers consider inattention to be one reason that many of their children don't do well in school. As Mrs. Lindley told me:

> They don't listen. And the problem don't start in this grade. That is another reason they are behind.

This teacher also said that attention can work the other way; not doing well in school may cause a child not to pay attention:

> With some children, even if they pay attention and get the assignment, they still can't do the work. They are defeated before they start. They say, "I can't do it anyway, so why pay attention".
>
> If they could read a little better, do math a little better, than they would have more confidence in themselves and they wouldn't play and talk and act silly.

The teachers consider attention to be a problem in which one child can affect the rest of the class. If inattention behavior is noisy enough, it hinders other children's ability to learn:

> Sometimes it is so noisy that those who want to hear, can't hear. (Mrs. Lindley)
>
> The rule of thumb is that you try to keep it quiet enough so that other children can concentrate. (Mrs. Barnes)

The teachers told me that dealing with inattention behavior takes up a great deal of class time that could be better spent. As Mrs. Barnes told me:

> If they could pay more attention, we could get more done. They could take in more; they could hear more physically. And academically we could cover more.

The teachers are concerned that the children be prepared for junior high where the consequences of inattention are more serious:

> We are trying to get them ready for junior high. Elementary school is not that rigid, but junior high is more regimented with only forty-five minutes for each class, and if you don't finish what you are supposed to do, you can't say, "Oh, I didn't finish". I have to get them into the habit of listening the first time. Junior high is very different from here where we will repeat three and four times.
>
> A child who is used to talking and walking around in class will be in a world of trouble in junior high. They will ask themselves, "Why is this wrong?" I've been doing this all along. Why am I in trouble?". This child will be confused.

Sitting in the classroom, I saw that the teachers do spend great amounts of time and energy dealing with the children's attention behavior. Attention is of visible importance to the teachers in their day-to-day management of the classroom and they communicate to both children and parents their belief in the importance of attention for learning. In conferences with parents, the teachers often gave attention as a reason why a child was not doing well. And when calling for attention in class, the teachers would sometimes make explicit the link between paying attention and learning, as the following excerpt from my field notes illustrate.

EXCERPT 1

The children in Mrs. Lindley's class were taking turns reading aloud essays they had written on "If I were Mayor of Philadelphia". Anthony mentioned lowering the speed limit to stop accidents and when he finished, Mrs. Lindley started talking about how traffic deaths had dropped in the U.S. immediately after the 55 mph speed limit had been imposed, but had risen as people stopped obeying the law. Harold and Lissa were talking to each other. Mrs. Lindley stopped and said to them, "I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't talk while I'm talking. If you would listen, you'd learn something".

EXCERPT 2

The children were reading a newspaper article in the Philadelphia Tribune, pulling out the information who, when, where, what and why to include in a paragraph they were supposed to write. Many of the children were talking to each other. Mrs. Lindley looked up from her desk and said, "I still hear a lot of people talking. You cannot do your work when you are running your mouth".

The importance of attention for these teachers also shows up in their fine-grained awareness of issues involved in attention. The teachers discuss attention with a great deal of specific detail and fine-grained analysis. Issues of attention are not something out of their awareness until pointed out by an outsider/researcher as, for example, is the case with the unofficial literacy that is the subject of Sue Fiering's section of this report.

In order to understand this problem that is so important to the teachers, it is necessary to ask what counts as attention for them.

(B) What Counts as Attention

Calling for attention--These teachers have many ways of calling for attention, some quite subtle and some very explicit. One of the most explicit ways that they call for attention is to include a mini-description of the attention behavior that they want. These little pictures that the teachers paint for the children provide a ruddimentary formulation of the behaviors that the teachers count as attention, albeit a formulation that will have to be refined as a number of things are taken into account.

For now, however, the little descriptions of attention behavior that the teachers sometimes provide for the children when calling for attention are a place to begin unraveling the complex phenomenon that is attention. In these mini-descriptions, control of the mouth, eyes and body figure prominently. For example, in the following two excerpts from my field notes, the teacher is concerned with where the children are looking. Illustration 1 provides some visual context for the excerpts. In both teachers' rooms the children's desks are pushed together facing each other in five or six large clusters, as shown below in the drawing of Mrs. Lindley's room.

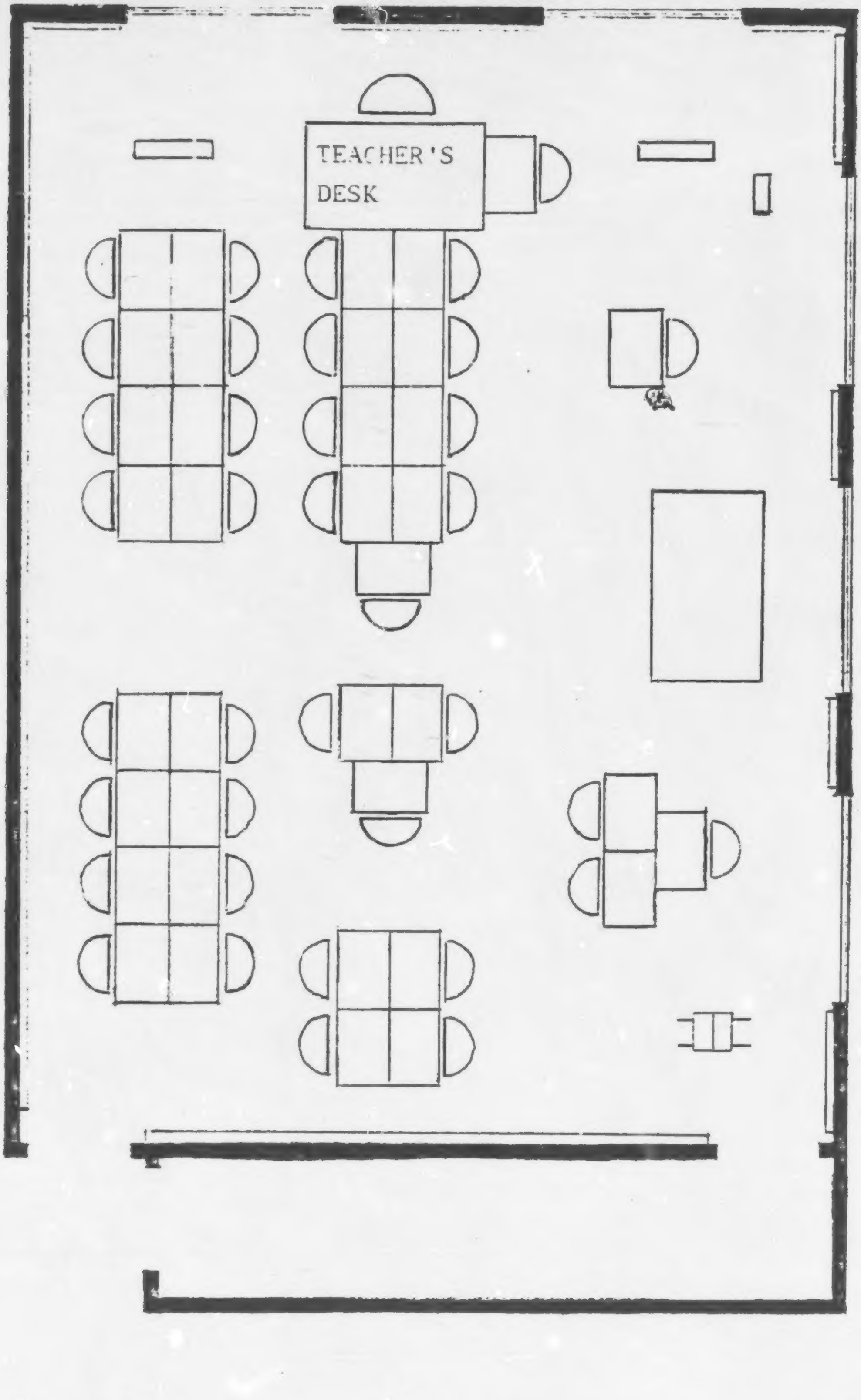

TEACHER'S DESK

ILLUSTRATION 1

MRS. LINDLEY'S ROOM

EXCERPT 3

Mrs. Barnes and the class were doing a workbook exercise in which they were reading a description of where a boy had traveled and then drawing his route on a map in the workbook. Mrs. Barnes was standing at the board asking questions and the children were answering them and then drawing on their maps. The class got noisy and Mrs. Barnes said, "Students, students. May I have your attention, please. May I have your attention, please. Anna, Tessa. Eyes up here, please".

EXCERPT 4

The class had been working at their desks on math problems. Mrs. Barnes left the children she had been working with and walked to the front of the room. She said, "May I have your attention please. Your attention please. Willie, Shelley, your eyes up this way so I can at least begin to think that you're listening. Mr. Sutton, Melinda". Then she began explaining one of the problems that a lot of people were having trouble with.

In the following two excerpts the teacher is concerned with the orientation of the children's bodies:

EXCERPT 5

Mrs. Barnes was teaching a phonic lesson. The children were repeating nonsense syllables and then the teacher would call on individuals to spell what they heard. One boy was turned in his chair looking blankly off to the side. Mrs. Barnes said to him: "I have a feeling I don't have your attention. Maybe if you turned your body this way I would feel more like I had your attention".

In the following excerpt the teacher is concerned that the children stop moving so that they can listen to her:

EXCERPT 6

Mrs. Barnes was giving the children instructions for finishing up a group project they were working on last week and told them they they would be moving into their old groups in order to finish the project. The children started moving into their groups before the teacher was finished with her instructions. She raised her voice as she continued to give directions: "So while you're in the group, make sure that everybody has the same information. Don't move please until I'm finished. DO NOT MOVE please, until I'm finished because you're worried about moving and you need to listen to what I'm saying, which you're responsible for doing".

In the following excerpts the teacher insists that the children stop other activities in order to pay attention:

EXCERPT 7

Mrs. Lindley told the class to read three particular articles in the Philadelphia

Tribune and to pull out the information, who, when, where, what and why. She told a few children to go to the back of the room and staple together the mimeographed sheets of the school newspaper, the Spaulding Journal. The class worked for a while and then Mrs. Lindley wanted to make an announcement to the main group. She said, "May I have the attention of all the people who are working on the newspapers? Stop writing for a second".

EXCERPT 8

After Sustained Silent Reading, the time each day when both teacher and children read library books or whatever they want to read, Daren asked Mrs. Barnes if he could read something from his book aloud to the class. Mrs. Barnes said to the class: "Daren has something he wants to read to you...Will you give him your undivided attention?...Your undivided attention means you aren't doing anything else now".

In the following excerpts the teacher is concerned with talking:

EXCERPT 9

Mrs. Lindley was reviewing with the children information they had learned earlier from oral reports made by individual children about famous blacks. Mrs. Lindley asked the class what they knew about Marion Anderson. Several kids were waving their hands, jumping in their seats and calling out, "Oooh, oooh, Mrs. Lindley". In one corner two girls were talking loudly to each other. Mrs. Lindley said to them, "When are you going to learn to stop talking and start listening?".

EXCERPT 10

Mrs. Lindley's class was divided into reading groups. Mrs. Lindley was sitting with one group, listening to them take turns reading aloud. The teacher's aide was sitting with another group, going over the answers to a workbook exercise. At a third group the children were working on a workbook exercise. The class was fairly noisy, with lots of people talking and with a few children playing with baseball cards and with pencils and pencil sharpeners. At the third group I heard two children's voices rise above the buzz of the rest of the class:

Vanessa: He always do that.
Willie: Oh, shut up.
Vanessa: You shut up before I beat your rump.

Mrs. Lindley looked over at them and said, "How can you be doing your work when you're talking that foolish talk?".

The teachers also indicate to the children that inattention is something that can be inferred from the inability to answer a question:

EXCERPT 11

Mrs. Barnes and the class were doing a workbook exercise in which they were translating a written description of a boy's travel into a line drawn on a map.

Mrs. Barnes would call on a child to read part of the description, and then ask the class questions about it. Daren read a paragraph and when Mrs. Barnes called on another boy to answer a question, he couldn't answer. Mrs. Barnes said, "I get the definite feeling we weren't listening when Daren was reading".

Thus, when the teachers call for attention they sometimes include a little description of the behavior they want. These behaviors are related to gaze direction, body orientation, body movement, side activities and talking. The teachers also tell the children they can infer inattention from things like the inability to answer a question.

Evidence of attention

When I asked the teachers how they know when the children are paying attention, they told me very similar things. For example, Mrs. Lindley said:

> I know they aren't paying attention if they are drawing, writing, digging in their desks, or playing with a pencil is another thing. If they pass signals, eye signals sometimes, or if they have a book on their desks when I say to clear your desks...if they are making noises.
>
> The way they sit and the way they hold themselves has a lot to do with attention. My concept of attention is sitting still and looking and looking at me. I assume they are paying attention if they are looking at me, if they put things down... if they stop what they are doing.
>
> Also, if they ask questions and want clarification, I think they are paying attention. If they do the assignment correctly; if they do the work halfway right.

Mrs. Barnes has similar criteria:

> Inattention is something you can see. It's something you learn to interpret over the years. It's largely body behavior and eye contact more than anything else.
>
> Eye to eye contact is what tells you. And their physical body. If they are under the desk, they aren't paying attention. If they are looking at me,I would assume they are paying attention. Anything beyond that would have to be a mind reader.
>
> I recognize inattention because of years of experience. Body language is the key, especially eye to eye contact.

On the other hand, she also said:

> Some kids just can't keep still, but they are still listening. And then I've got three girls who are quiet as mice but I know they aren't listening. Kids that don't listen have certain

kinds of body behavior. So you have to look at the work. If the work says they aren't listening, they aren't listening.

Thus, the teachers say that they use as evidence of attention a number of behaviors related to control of the mouth (talking, making noises), the eyes (eye to eye contact, eye signals), and the body (body position, body movements, side activities). They also say they may have to infer attention from a child's ability to carry out instructions or to do his work correctly.

The teachers have a great deal of faith in their ability to distinguish attention from inattention. (As Mrs. Barnes says, above, inattention is "something you learn to interpret over the years".) However, the teachers do not claim always to be right. They have examples of all four of the possibilities from the following four-way chart:

CHART 1

Teacher thinks (1) child is paying attention. Child is paying attention.	Teacher thinks (2) child is paying attention. Child is not paying attention.
Teacher thinks (3) child is not paying attention Child is paying attention	Teacher thinks (4) child is not paying attention Child is not paying attention

As chart 2 illustrates, boxes one and four describe situations in which what the child is doing and what the teacher thinks the child is doing are the same, whereas boxes two and three describe a mismatch:

CHART 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
TEACHER	+	+	-	-
CHILD	+	-	-	-

The teacher believe that most of what happens in the classroom falls into boxes one and four, that is, that most of the time what they think the child is doing and what the child actually is doing, are the same. However, there are also instances of the type described above by Mrs. Barnes in which a child's body behavior persuades the teacher that the child is paying attention, but the teacher decides later, after having seen the child's work, that he hadn't been paying attention after all (box (2). And there are instances such as this one told me by Mrs. Lindley (box (3):

> Terri was running her mouth and I thought she wasn't listening, but I called on her and she still knew what was going on.

These are still teacher perceptions. That is, if a teacher believes, for example, that a child is paying attention and then later changes her mind and believes that the child had not been paying attention after all, it is still a matter of the teacher's belief.

In adding an observer's viewpoint in order to evaluate the teacher's opinion that there are relatively few instances in which the teacher's perception and the actual situation do not match, it is necessary to remember that the observer judges by the teacher's action. In the case of a mismatch in which the teacher thinks a child is paying attention when he is not, there are numerous examples each day of a teacher not calling for the attention of a child who is displaying some or all of the signs that the teacher say they use as evidence of inattention. As we will see, there is a difference between what the teachers perceive as inattention and what they publicly notice. The teacher cannot, and do not even want to, publicly do something about everything they perceive as inattention.

Part III is an extended examination of a pattern of interaction that sometimes creates the mismatch in which the teacher believes a child is not paying attention when in fact he is. That section examines a pattern of interaction that the children bring into the classroom that is sometimes called down by the teachers as inattentive even when it is quite attentive to the instructional task at hand. This is a pattern of mock adversary exchanges--loud, strident, playful, mock aggressive challenges and responses--which the teachers consider inattentive, but which turn out to be a way of talking that can be used to do a number of things, some of which are attentive to the classroom task at hand. When working together in the classroom, for example, the children often use this mock adversary style to correct each other's work and to give explanations.

The teachers rank the various evidences of attention and say that they put more faith in evidence such as test results and the ability to follow directions than in the immediate behavioral signs of attention. (As Mrs. Barnes says, above, "you can be fooled by just body behavior, so you have to look at the work. If the work says they aren't listening, they aren't listening".)

Using a child's work as evidence of attention is complicated. It is not that teachers routinely suspend judgment until they see the child's work and then decide whether or not he had been paying attention. For all practical purposes, teachers make their decisions about who is paying attention based on events of the moment. However, as we will see, interpreting and acting upon the events of the moment are affected by how the teacher categorizes particular children. It is here that the child's work is likely to influence the events of the moment. If the teacher has seen again and again that a child can or can't do his work, she takes that and a number of other things into account to form opinions of him that affect her perceptions of his attention behavior and her willingness to publicly notice it. As we will see, there are children whom the teachers consider to have a hard time paying attention whose behavior the teachers are far more likely to call down than they are very similar behavior from higher ability children who "don't always need to pay attention". And Part III is an examintion of a type of behavior that the teachers say is done by low ability children, but which observation shows to be done by children of all ability levels but to be far more commonly publicly noticed in low ability children.

So, for practical purposes, a child's work does not so much apply to the particular occasion of attention that it follows, but applies instead in a more general way. It contributes to a teacher's categorization of the child, which affects the teacher's perception of the child on specific occasions of attention and also her willingness to publicly notice behavior she considers inattentive.

Using a child's work as evidence of attention raises other issues as well. The teachers say both that they infer attention from the ability to do work and that they infer inattention from the inability to do work. Underlying both inferences is the teachers' belief that learning requires attention, which is the basis of their concern with attention in the first place.

The teachers do not assume, however, that all failure to learn is due to inattention. I have seen Mrs. Barnes, for example, say to a child showing many signs of attention--body aligned to the teacher, eyes following the teacher as she stepped up to the blackboard and back again, body still and mouth silent--"What's wrong, Mary? Your face tells me you don't understand." And the teachers gave me a number of reasons besides inattention for why particular children were not doing well in school, for example, lack of intelligence, emotional problems, "starved home environment", being passed from grade to grade without learning the skills of each grade or "just not doing the work".

Neither do the teachers believe that all learning requires constant attention. I have seen children who totally ignored the teacher's explanation of a workbook exercise who nevertheless were able to do the assignment perfectly because they were able to figure it out for themselves. The teachers of course are aware of cases such as this, and, as we will see, they work them into a theory of differential attention requirements for different children. As Mrs. Barnes told me, there are children who don't always need to pay attention when "they can do the work anyway".

Thus, as the teachers know, it is possible to have attention without understanding and it is also possible to have understanding without attention, especially when the chain of events is sequential and the child is supposed to pay attention now in order to understand something he will do later.

If therefore, a teacher is faced with a piece of inferior work, it is difficult for her to know if the problem was inattention, misunderstanding or something else, especially when the work is examined later, away from its original circumstances.

Even so, decisions must be made about why a child can't do his work because what the teacher does next may depend upon what she decides is the problem. For example, if she believes that the child didn't understand rather than that he wasn't paying attention, she is more likely to go over the work again. I have seen Mrs. Barnes call a child up to her desk to go over a homework exercise because "I don't think you understand what we were trying to do". And I have seen Mrs. Barnes preface a review lesson with "a lot of people didn't understand this lesson on weights and measures so I want to go over it again".

This is another case in which the teachers make their interpretations by taking into account what they already know about the child. As Mrs. Lindley told me when I asked her how she knows whether it is inattention or something else that causes a child to do badkly on a piece of work:

> If I know each child as an individual, I almost know which ones weren't paying attention.

Thus, what the teachers leave unstated when they say they can infer inattention from a child's work is an intervening variable: the individual child. That is, the teacher brings to her interpretation of a child's work all her prior knowledge of the child. If the work is not done correctly and if the child is categorized as one who has trouble paying attention, the teacher is much more like to infer inattention than if she is looking at the work of a child who almost always pays attention.

Summary

The teachers say they use as evidence of attention certain behaviors related to control of the mouth, eyes and body and that they sometimes have to infer attention from the child's ability to do his work. They have faith in their ability to tell the difference between attention and inattention but they do not claim always to be right. There are times that they think a child is paying attention when he isn't, and times when they think a child isn't paying attention when he is. They rank the various evidences of attention and say that they put the most faith in after the fact evidence such as a child's ability to do his work. This raises the issue of what effect a child's work has on decisions of the moment and the issue of the relationship between attention and understanding.

Both issues involve consideration of the individual child. In the case of the first issue, a teacher faced with a child's behavior makes interpretations about attention passed partly upon what else she knows about the child, including what she has learned from his work in general. In the case of the second issue, a teacher faced with a child's work must make decisions about his prior behavior, that is, was it inattention or misunderstanding, or something else that caused him to do poorly. Again, her interpretation is based partly upon what else she knows about the child, including what she has learned about his attention behavior from previous face to face encounters.

Thus, inferences are made back and forth between a child's work and his face to-face-behavior. To make inferences about inattention from a child's work, the teachers use what they have learned about the child in face-to-face eninteractions. To make inferences about attention from face-to-face interaction with a child, the teachers use what they have learned from his work.

(C) Degrees of attention

Attention is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. The teachers do not insist that the children pay constant, unflagging attention. There are degrees of attention that are appropriate in different situations. This section looks at the fact that attention varies both by the activity to which attention should be paid and by the person to whom attention should be paid. Moreover, the two interact, so that the attention appropriate to the same activity may vary according to the person to whom attention should be paid.

Activities

There is a broad range of allowable attention behavior over the course of a school day which correlates very roughly with four categories named by one of the teachers. This teacher divided class time into four types of activites:

(1) When I am teaching a lesson or giving directions
(2) When they are carrying out work I've given them
(3) Tests
(4) Free time

For the fourth category, "free time", attention is not really an issue since there is no official classroom business to which the children should be paying attention. However, the category serves as an informative dividing line, not only for what is and is not appropriate in the classroom in general, but also for what is and is not appropriate when attention is at issue in the classroom. That is, "free time" does not mean that the children can do anything. During free time the teachers exclude certain activities as being inappropriate for the classroom. And once there is official classroom business to pay attention to, the teachers exclude other activities as inappropriate.

Each of the other three categories named by the teacher, "teaching a lesson or giving directions", "the children carrying out work", and "tests" has its appropriate level of attention. As Mrs. Lindley told me:

> I insist on attention when I am presenting a lesson, particularly if it is something new and also when giving directions. And then they can go on from there.
>
> When I am giving directions I ask them to sit still, be quiet and listen, but once they have gotten directions, they can talk, they can move and they can wiggle...If there's something else I want to tell them or if they begin playing, then I'll call their attention back. If I feel they are getting too loud or if I feel that playing is going on, then I'll say something.

Mrs. Barnes has similar criteria:

> I only ask for attention if I really want it. So, when teaching a lesson, giving specific information or giving directions I ask for attention. To get it done, usually you can talk unless it's a test. I insist on absolute quiet at test time.

As the following excerpt from my field notes illustrates, the range of permitted attention behavior as the teacher and class move across these categories, through even so small a portion of the day as fifteen minutes can be quite broad. In this particular fifteen minute period, Mrs. Barnes' class moves from free time to the teacher giving directions and teaching a review lesson, to the children carrying out some work on their own:

EXCERPT 12

The children came back to the classroom from music class which is in another room. They were very noisy as they came in the door, laughing, hitting, calling out to each other.

Three boys ran up to the front of the room. One of them took a piece of paper out of his desk. The other two tried to grab it away from him but he kept holding it out of their reach.

William threw a whiffle ball at Tania and she picked it up and threw it back, hard. He caught it and lobbed it gracefully so that it caught inside the wide turtleneck collar on her sweater and she said loudly, "Look at that boy shoot".

Mrs. Barnes told everybody to sit down because she wanted them to copy their homework from the board.

Everybody but William sat down and when Mrs. Barnes stared at him, he sat down too.

The class was still very noisy. Almost everybody was talking, some very loudly.

Mrs. Barnes walked to the blackboard and said, "May I have your attention, please. May I have your attention up here". On the board was a list of spelling words and a list of math problems.

The class was still very noisy. At one cluster of desks, two boys were hitting each other's papers with their pens. Two girls were putting their hands in the path of the pens and then snatching them out of the way, just in time.

Mrs. Barnes told Carolyn to turn off the lights, which is a signal for the children to "freeze" their mouths and bodies. A couple of kids made a show of freezing their limbs in the middle of the action of putting books inside their desk. The class got quieter but a lot of people were still talking. Mrs. Barnes folded her arms and waited. From the back of the room someone called out, "Lights is off, ya'll". Someone else said, "Ya'll be quiet".

Almost everyone stopped talking and the ones who were still talking lowered their voices. Mrs. Barnes said, "Lights on, please". Carolyn, who had been waiting by the light switch, turned the lights back on.

Mrs. Barnes told the children that she wanted them to copy the spelling words and to copy the math problems from the board for homework. The math problems had decimals in them and she started asking the children questions about decimals, as a review.

At the cluster of desks at the back of the room, Roy had a two-inch purple plastic baseball cap that he kept putting on his head and rubbing it back and forth. Once he tipped it and said, "Howdy boys". When it fell off his head, one of the other kids grabbed it and put it on his own head.

At the same cluster of desks, Alice pushed her desk against the desk of the boy who sits across from her. He kept moving his desk back and she would push her's up enough to meet his. Finally he put a pencil between the two desks.

At the same cluster of desks, Jeff and Paula were talking loudly. Mrs. Barnes looked at them and said, "Eyes up here, please".

She finished reviewing decimals and told the children to copy the spelling words and the math problems. Then she sat down at her own desk and looked out over the room.

Immediately there was a surge in the noise level as the children got out paper and pens, borrowed pens from each other and as many children started talking. The noise level dropped as most children started to copy the spelling words and it began to rise again after a few minutes.

At one cluster, Mike leaned back in his chair and twisted his body so that he could see the paper of Tracey who was sitting at the cluster of desks behind him. She covered up her page with her hand and said, "You don't come over here". He let his chair come back down to the floor.

About half of the people in the room were talking. Most were copying the spelling words at the same time. The room was quite noisy.

One of the clusters at the back of the room got very noisy. Alice's voice rose sharply and I heard her say, "You're a wierdo, wierdo, wierdo, wierd".

Mrs. Barnes looked up from her desk and said, "Hush back there. You need to be copying your words".

This excerpt gives some idea of the range of this particular teacher's version of appropriate behavior across three categories, "free time", giving directions or teaching a lesson" and "children carrying out their work".

When the children first come into the room from music class and there is no particular classroom business for them to be paying attention to, the teacher allows a great deal of loud talking, shouting out, hitting, laughing and playing, including some playing in which three boys are running around the room and a boy and girl are throwing a ball at each other.

The teacher begins the transition between free time and giving directions by telling the children to sit down. Then she calls for their attention: "May I have your attention, please. May I have your attention up here". When the class remains noisy and some children continue playing, the teacher asks a child to turn off the lights, a signal for the children to "freeze" their mouths and bodies. This is a technique that this particular teacher often uses to get the children's attention. It is a time-consuming technique, but, as this teacher told me, it is one that she has found comfortable for herself and which conveys to the children a lesson she wants them to learn:

> I'm not a screamer so I had to find a way (to get their attention) that's comfortable for me. This takes longer but I know I am a role model for them and I want to show them that there are some people who can get their attention without hollering at them.

In the excerpt presented above, many of the children continue talking after the teacher gives them the signal to freeze, and the teacher folds her arms and waits. A child calls out to the rest of the class, "Lights is off, ya'll". And another child calls out, "Ya'll be quiet". (It is common in this class that children will call out orders to the rest of the class during one of these waiting periods. These commands are often shouted out in voices that are much, much louder than the voices they are trying to silence.)

Finally it gets quiet enough to suit the teacher; not everyone has stopped talking but those who are still talking have lowered their voices. The teacher begins giving directions to the children about copying their spelling and math homework.

While the teacher is giving directions and then teaching the review lesson, she publicly notices some, but by no means all, of the inattention behavior that is occuring in the room. She publicly notices for example, that Jeff and Paula are not looking at her ("Eyes up here, please."), but she does not do anything about Roy and another child playing with a tiny plastic baseball cap or about Alice pushing her desk up against the desk of the boy who sits across from her, gradually moving the two desks out of line with the rest of the cluster.

Once the teacher sits down, leaving the children to work on their own, she permits a great deal of talking, including some between children who sit in different clusters or desks. At one point at least half of the class is talking, but it is only when one group gets particularly loud and the voice of one girl can be heard above the noise of the rest of the class that the teacher steps in to tell that group to work.

Thus, the teacher demands much stricter attention behavior for the category "giving directions/teaching a lesson" than for the category "kids carrying out work". While she is giving directions and teaching the review lesson, she asks several times in several different ways that the children stop talking and playing and she publicly notices, for example, that two of the children are not looking at her, although she settles for behavior that is much less stringent than total silence and stillness. Once the children are working on their own, the teacher permits a great deal of talking and playing, and it is only when the talking and playing gets quite loud that she publicly notices any of it.

These teachers reserve their strictest demands regarding attention behavior for the third category, "tests". For important tests they tell the children to move their desks from the clusters that are their normal seating arrangements into rows facing the front, and they forbid talking and most side activities. Insisting on such behavior carries a symbolism that the teachers do not always wish to invoke. For example, in the following excerpt, when Mrs. Barnes gave the children a psychological questionnaire to measure their feelings about various school activities, she changed her mind about invoking the symbolism of test taking:

EXCERPT 13

Mrs. Barnes had a set of psychological questionnaires that she wanted to give the kids to find out their feelings about math, writing, reading, test taking, etc. She told the class to move their desks into rows because she was going to give them a test. As the children started moving their chairs, she changed her mind and said, "No, don't do that, it's not really a test test".

Thus, there are degrees of attention that are appropriate in the classroom and they correlate roughly with the teachers' categories, "teaching a lesson/giving directions", "kids working on their own", and "tests". The range of allowable attention behavior across these categories is quite wide. Each category, however, has an internal structure for which tere are degrees of appropriate attention behavior.

A great deal has been written about the internal structure of the category "teaching a lesson". (See, for example, Mehan 1979, Sinclair and Coulthard 1975).

One unit of classroom discourse that these people have studies is a three-move exchange, whose parts Mehan has labelled "initiation", "reply" and "evaluation". In the simplest form of such an exchange, the teacher asks a question, a child answers and the teacher evaluates the answer, for example:

Teacher: What is two and two?
Child: Four
Teacher: Very good.

Excerpt 14 below examines a much more complicated example of such an initiation/reply/evaluation unit with regard to attention. In the excerpt Mrs. Barnes is teaching a lesson on nutrition from a U.S. Department of Agriculture leaflet that each child has on his desk. The leaflet is printed in four large blocks of color with information about a different food group written inside each block. In the excerpt, the teacher tells the children to look at the yellow block, where information about the milk group is written. She asks the children (at lines 2-3) a question, which she restates twice, a little differently each time: "OK, what is the contribution to diet there? What do we get from the milk group? Why is it important for us?" The five-part answer to this questions is found in the yellow block in a paragraph labelled "Contribution to Diet":

> CONTRIBUTION TO DIET
>
> Milk is our leading source of calcium which is needed for bones and teeth. It also provides high quality protein, riboflavin, vitamin A and many other nutrients.

EXCERPT 14

1 Teacher: OK, let's look at the yellow--the yellow from the milk group.
2 OK, what is the contribution to diet there? What do we get
3 from the milk-group. Why is it important for us?
4 Shelley: Vitamin A, vitamin A.
5 Teacher: Use our handsss. Why is that important for us? What do we
6 get from that?
7 Shelley: Vitamin A.
8 Teacher: OK, what else?
9 Ron: High quality.
10 Teacher: High quality what?
11 Ron: Um, protein.
12 Teacher: Right, cause high quality just describes what it is that we're
13 getting. *Protein,* OK, we've got *protein*, vitamin A, what else?

Teacher: There's something else that's reeeaally important. Jim, are you with us in the yellow with the milk group. I hope. What else do we get?

Roy: Vitamin D.

Teacher: Vitamin D comes from there. Yes, usually A and D go together. It doesn't even say that there. It's good that you know that. (Slowly, drawn out:) Let's look and see there's something there else. Mighty important for people our age---- (softly:) Your age.

Lonnie: Riboflavin.

Teacher: Riboflavin--but that's not it. You need it, need it, need it bad.

Paula: Nutrition.

Teacher: Nutrition is what good eating is all about. There's something there. Don't call out. Right there in the yellow it says: "Contributions to Diet. Milk, milk products are a great source of?"

Aretha: Milk

Allen: Cheese

Lonnie: Ice cream

Cindy: Salcium

Teacher: You got a hard "c" and a soft "c". Say it please, class: "CALCIUM"

Class: CALCIUM

Teacher: Again

Class: CALCIUM

Teacher: OK

(Three second pause)

A few people start talking. Mrs. Barnes looks at the leaflet in her hands and flips a page. She turns to the group of children closest to her and asks them in a lower voice if they have read the back of the leaflet, apparently in order to gauge how far the class has read so she can decide from where to take her next question. The class gets louder. At one table I hear the following exchange:

Cindy: (Half singing, taunting) Aretha go with Sonia. Aretha go with Allen.

Aretha: I'll break your bones!

The teacher turns to face the whole class and says:

Teacher: Uh.
Uh, students.
Can I have your attention please
UH we're waiting.

The class gets quieter and the teacher starts another line of questioning about whether or not sugar is necessary for good nutrition.

As the excerpt shows, the teacher works for a long time to get the answer she wants, in all of its parts and in the correction form. At lines 4-8 a child gives her part of the answer, "vitamin A", but doesn't raise his hand and the teacher doesn't count the answer until he raises his hand. At lines 9-13 a child gives the teacher an adjective, "high quality", and she has to prompt him before he provides the rest of the phrase, "protein".

At this point Jim has turned away from the teacher and is talking to his seatmate. Mrs. Browns calls him back to the lesson (lines 14-15) with a sentence that handles his inattention behavior at the same time that it furthers the business of teaching the lesson; she restates for him (and presumably for the rest of the class) just where he should be looking to find the answer she wants: "Jim, are you with us in the yellow with the milk group. I hope".

At lines 17-19 the teacher gets an unexpected answer, "vitamin D" and takes time to praise the boy for knowing something extra that wasn't in the paragraph. At lines 25-26 she gets a very general answer, "nutrition" which she uses on an occasion to restate the general theme of the lesson: "Nutrition is what good eating is all about".

The teacher is still looking for the word "calcium" at the lines 27-29 and she finally uses a technique that forces the children to give her that word. She directs the children's eyes to the yellow block in the pamphlet and to a particular sentence written in that block so that all they have to do is fill in the blank that she leaves with her voice: "Right there in the yellow it says: 'Contribution to Diet. Milk, milk products are a great source of '" (here her voice trails off into the oral equivalent of a blank space to be filled in).

Finally at lines 33-38 a girl fills in the blank with "salcium," and the teacher has the class pronounce the word correctly together, "calcium", and then louder, "CALCIUM". Then the teacher says, "OK", which is the final move in this particularly drawnout instance of the classroom discourse unit, "initiation/response/evaluation".

The teacher pauses for a few seconds to look through her leaflet and the children start talking. She asks one group of children a question to gauge how far the class has read and the rest of the class gets louder. Then the teacher asks for attention and begins a new question.

A number of things are going on here regarding attention. As long as the teacher is conducting the long search for the answer to her question she insists on fairly strict attention behavior, for example, calling down Jim who is talking to his neighbor. However, once the last piece of the answer has been provided and the teacher has the class sing out the word, "calcium", she does two things. She pauses for a few seconds and then she switches from addressing the whole group to addressing a smaller group. (In Susan Philips' (1972) phrase, she switches from one "participant structure" to another). Thus, the rest of the class find themselves in a very brief period of "down time", and they begin to get noisy. There is nothing specific for them to pay attention to. Attention behavior at this point is more symbolic than anything else; it is an attention behavior owed to the lesson in general and to the teacher in general. The teacher lets the noise go on until she is ready to begin a new line of questioning. Then she calls for attention and begins again.

Teaching styles

Another factor that makes a difference in the degree of attention that is required is the teacher herself. Although both teachers have the same broad categories for the activities of the school day and both rank them in the same order as to the degree of attention required, the actual attention behavior allowed within each category is different for the two teachers who have quite different teaching styles.

Neither teacher runs a traditionally quiet classroom with children separated from each other and facing the teacher in rows. Both classrooms are often quite noisy. The children's desks are pushed together facing each other so that they form five or six large clusters. The teachers' reasons for this range from "it lets the children work together" to "it looks neater" and "it makes it easier to get around the room".

As we have seen, both teachers usually let the children talk when they are carrying out work that the teacher has assigned and both teachers encourage the children to work together. Neither teacher seems particularly concerned with "cheating", valuing instead the ability to work together.

These children work together, not just on assignments and workbook exercises but also on activities that are often considered solitary, such as writing stories or reading library books. For example, in the following excerpt, a boy is writing a Halloween story:

EXCERPT 15

The children in Mrs. Lindley's class were writing Halloween stories. Don was writing a story about some men walking in the woods and he would stop every few lines to tell the story to his seatmate, Bob. He read the lines fluently and dramatically, changing his voice for each character. He got well into the story when he said to Rob: "You know what I forgot? I forgot to say they had a gun". Then he wrote that into his story.

A boy at another cluster of desks leaned over and said to Don, "Should I put in two people or three?" With an exaggerated thinking, expression, Don leaned back in his chair, paused a long time and then said, "Three".

In the following excerpt, three boys are reading during Sustained Silent Reading, a time each day when the teacher and the children read library books. The period of time set aside for this is gradually lengthened as the year progresses.

EXCERPT 16

Three boys were sitting beside each other during Sustained Silent Reading. Each had a library book in front of him. They were pointing out pictures in their own books to each other and they were flipping through each other's books, pointing out with their fingers places in the text and talking about that they were pointing. Two boys traded books with each other and each boy started to read the book he then had.

All of this working together contributes to a high noise level in the classroom as does the great amount of playing and talking about things that are not related to the lesson, a great deal of which also goes on.

Thus, a number of things contribute to making these classrooms active and noisy. For example, the seating arrangement with clusters of children facing each other in desks that touch, and the teachers' encouraging the children to work together, help set up a situation in which the children not only have rights and duties regarding the teacher and the larger classroom, but they also have rights and duties regarding each other within the individual clusters of desks. For part of each day, classroom discourse takes the form of a dialog, with the teacher playing one part and thirty-three children collaborating to play the other part, but for larger parts of each day, verbal interaction is among children.

Even though both teachers run active, noisy classrooms, there are many differences in allowable attention behavior between the two classrooms. Mrs. Barnes' classroom is a much noisier, more physically active place than is Mrs. Lindley's. During lessons, for example, Mrs. Barnes allows more talking among children and louder talking as well, than does Mrs. Lindley. Mrs. Lindley is quicker to call down talking and quicker to mention attention behavior related to body positions. (For example, "Turn yourself around and listen". And, "Take your head out from that hood and pay attention to this".) She sometimes tells the children that their talking irritates her. ("Don, turn around. You are not going to annoy me again today with your silly talking".)

When the children are working on their own, the noise level in Mrs. Barnes' room can get quite loud before she does anything about it. Children sometimes walk over to another cluster of desks to talk. There are usually a number of people playing with small toys or with the paraphernalia of writing: pens, pencils, paper, pencil sharpeners. A child will occasionally drift up to the board and write an insult (for example, "What's that lump? Bernice's stomach"), a message ("Hello Miss May"), or a directive ("Shut up.").

Mrs. Lindley, on the other hand, steps in to quiet the children much sooner.

She doesn't let children get out of their desks and she doesn't permit the children to use the board for their own messages, even during recess or lunchtime; "I don't let the kids write on my board".

The teachers are very aware that their styles are different. As Mrs. Lindley told me:

> (Mrs. Barnes) and I are different. She can stand a lot of noise. She can tune out a lot. She just tunes some of it out. But I hear everything. I don't want to hear a lot of noise and foolish talking because I can't stand it. I just refuse to tolerate it.

Mrs. Barnes contrasted herself to other teachers and explained why she tolerates so much noise:

> If 0 is absolute quiet, and 100% is on the ceiling, most teachers lean toward the quiet, 30-0. Mine runs on the high side, 40-70. Philosophically I don't believe that noise is the antithesis of learning. I believe there's a need for quiet times and that that is a learned behavior; they have to learn when to be quiet. But there's also a need to talk, to share ideas, to help somebody.

Mrs. Barnes told me there are lots of noisy things she lets the children work out for themselves.

> There are lots of things I just don't get involved in. They have to work it out themselves. I'm not convinced about who took the pencil...
>
> Kids have a whole range of things they do that don't need my monitoring. Like pencils: "He took my pencil". They loved every minute of it. She's so glad he took her pencil, she doesn't know what to do.

Summary

The teachers require different degrees of attention for different activities of the school day. The teachers' own categories, "teaching a lesson/giving directions", "kids working on their own", and "tests", account for some of the differences in allowable attention behavior and also provide a rationale. That is, the teachers require the amount of attention that they feel is necessary both for teaching and for learning. The teachers believe that lessons and directions require more focused attention if they are to be taught successfully or learned successfully; teachers need attention if they are to teach and children need attention if they are to learn. On the other hand, when the children are working on their own, the duties of both the teacher and the child can be accomplished in an atmosphere of less strict attention.

As the teachers move through the school day, they continuously let up on attention, rein it in and let up again. The teachers' own categories, "teaching a lesson", "kids working on their own", and "tests", account for some of the differences in allowable attention behavior, but within those categories, class time is a series of ever-shifting situations for which there are also degrees of inappropriate attention. The teachers do not have the attention of their students all the time, nor do they want it; such a situation would be almost intolerably taxing. There are countless fleeting periods of "down time" during a school day, as well as a smaller number of longer periods in which attention to school things is not required. A picture emerges of attention as an ever-changing phenomenon, only as strict as it needs to be to accomplish the task at hand.

Another factor that makes a difference in the degree of attention that is required is the teacher herself. Both teachers continuously let go of attention and pull it in again, but they have different tolerances for how far they let go before they pull it in. Again, the picture is of attention as being only as strict as it needs to be, in this case, as strict as it needs to be for the individual tolerances of the teacher.

(D) Selectively Noticed Attention:

There are other features of context that make a difference in the negotiation of attention behavior in the classroom. There is a difference between what the teacher perceives as inattention and what she publicly notices. This section looks at the fact that certain kinds of inattention behavior and certain behavior from certain kinds of children are more likely to bepublicly noticed by the teacher.

The Child-- A number of people have pointed out that a teacher's prior theories about a child affect her perception of the child's behavior. (See, for example, Anderson-Levitt 1980, Mehan et al. 1980, Harvey 1980.) The same behavior displayed by different children may be interpreted differently. This is seen as an issue of unconscious categorization that affects teachers' perceptions. Whatever unconscious catergorization they might also do, both teachers in this study are quite aware that they consciously treat the attention behavior of different children differently. Mrs. Barnes told me that this is a fact of life that the children have to get used to:

> One thing kids have to learn is that they are different from their neightbor, but the same, in that somebody might be able to talk for five minutes, and that somebody else can not talk for five minutes out of that 25 minures and get things done. They need to know that people are different and the same along a whole lot of different lines and that I don't expect the same thing from Tania as I do from Sam.
>
> If a kid is a slow writer and I've got ten sentences on the board (for him to copy), and the kid is fiddling under the desk, and the kid is a fiddler, then I'm going to deal with that behavior a lot quicker than I am some kid over here who's talking but is able to finish his work.
>
> Tania Dawkins could talke the legs off a piano stool, but rarely did her work ever come up incomplete. Rarely, By the same token, the person she usually talked to, Sandra--and it's not a case of brightness, it's a case of concentration I would imagine. She was able to concentrate and do two things. Whereas, Sandra, who was just as bright, was not able to do that. So that her work would come up uncompleted whereas Tania's would be complete every time and be well done.

Mrs. Barnes once categorized a group of children for me as

(1) "kids who know when they don't need to pay attention:

(2) "kids who come close to knowing when they don't need to pay attention"

(3) "kids who pay attention almost all the time"

(4) "kids who have a hard time paying attention"

(5) miscellaneous category

She put three children out of the group of thirty-two into the first category These are "the children who can do the work without always paying attention." She said that one girl, for instance, "will listen when she doesn't understand Today I gave a math test back. She got a grade unacceptable to her. Her ears perked up and she listened while I explained the problems." Mrs. Barnes said that the children in this category are "academically above the others," and that they "can find something constructive to do when they aren't listening." for example, "some work they are behind in, or they will go beyond where they need to go." These children "use their time well, and they know what to do when they have extra time." Mrs. Barnes said that she doesn't mind when these children don't pay attention, as long as they "already understand the work," and as long as it "doesn't interfere with my teaching or distract the other kids."

Here, then, is an example of an interaction of contextual features. For this teacher, what makes a difference in the inattention behavior she is willing to publicly notice depends not just upon the kind of child, but also upon the type of behavior. That is, she says she doesn't mind if certain children don't pay attention, as long as their behavior doesn't distract her or the other children.

Into the second category, "kids who come close to knowing when they don't need to pay attention," the teacher put six children who are "just beginning to learn people."

Into the third category, "kids who pay attention almost all the time," the teacher put four children who "don't realize there are some things they don't have to listen to." She said that these children are "quieter and stiller than the other kids." She also put a child into this category who "listens because she really likes me as a person. She would listen to anything I said." Into this category the teacher also put a child whose "quiet way of listening" means that you are "likely to miss her and lump her with the one who space out. You have to do a real close up eye kind of thing on her."

The fourth category for this teacher is "kids who have a hard time paying attention." Into this category she put five children who are "the quiet, reticent, internal, turn the world off kind of person, the kind you have to bring back a lot."

The teacher also put five children into this category who are "too busy, too up, too either worried about other things or too active to slow down." The teacher also put three people into this category who "don't have what it takes to pay attention." One girl, for example, is "so intellectually incapable that anything you speak over two syllables is difficult for her." Also into this category the teacher put a child who "just refuses" to pay attention: "It's not that she can't. She just refuses."

Into the miscellaneous category the teacher put three children, including for example, a boy "who never comes to school enough for me to really figure him out."

The Behavior

We will next consider that certain types of inattention behavior are more likely to be publicly noticed by the teachers, and then come back to this teacher's categories of children to see how both the type of child and the type of inattention behavior interact to affect what the teacher publicly notices.

Publicly noticing inattention (whether by disciplining the child, or simply by letting him know that she is aware of his behavior) means that the teacher must follow through. If she raises a piece of behavior to a level at which it become an issue between her and the children, she must then deal with it. She and the children together must bring the situation to some resolution. The teachers therefore work out an arrangement with which they and the children can both live. As Mrs. Barnes told me, "Fifth graders are at a silly age. Some inattention I just ignore. It's easier for them and easier for me." Some things, of course, are easier to ignore than others. As Mrs. Lindley told me, "Sometimes you can't ignore them because they are so loud--they just bring your attention to them."

With a class of thirty-three or so children, a teacher is faced at almost any given time with many types of inattention behavior, and she chooses the ones she will do something about. For example, in the following excerpt four children are sitting in a row. One is drawing, one is staring out the door, and two are talking. One child's voice become suddenly louder. The child whose behavior the teacher publicly notices is the one whose voice can be heard above the other voice.

EXCERPT 17

Mrs. Lindley was teaching a social studies lesson at the front of the room, facing the children. At a table in the middle of the room were the following children.

MATTIE HOWARD VANESSA DARNELL

PAM

Mattie was drawing on her journal cover with her body turned at an angle away from the teacher. Darnell was staring at the door in the back of the room. Howard and Vanessa were talking, and Vanessa's voice suddenly became louder. From my seat at the side of the room I could hear the words "pencil sharpener" and "I'm gonna." Mrs. Lindley said to Vanessa, "Vanessa, you need to listen to what I'm saying. I can hear you over here."

Certain kinds of inattention behavior tend to be publicly noticed more than other types. It is not a matter of fixed rules, but of tendencies and lieklihoods. At almost any given time during the day, many of the children exhibit some of the behaviors that the teachers say they use as evidence of inattention. Of these behaviors, the ones that the teachers most often do something about are the ones

(1) that are loud

(2) that last a long time

(3) that draw in other children

(4) In which one child's voice can be distinguished above the voices of other children who may also be talking.

(5) in which a child moves from one place in the room to another.

Behaviors that combine several of these features are even more likely to be publicly noticed.

Noise level is a common denominator of features (1) and (4) and it figures in many combinations. Itis not that the teachers are simply trying to reduce the noise level in their classrooms; it is inattentive noise they want to get rid of. For example, I have seen Mrs. Barnes ask the class to repeat their spelling words in unison as a method of stopping the talking and playing that was going on all over the room. Shouting out the spelling words, the class was actually much noisier than they ahd been while talking and playing. And I have earlier mentioned that when Mrs. Barnes stops what she is doing and waits silently for the attention of the class, a few children often shout out commands to the rest of the class, for example, "shut up ya'll," or "Mrs. Barnes is waiting." Although these commands can be much, much louder than the behavior the children are trying to silence, Mrs. Brown never tells the children to stop.

Noise level is complex. The appropriate noise level in a classroom changes all the time, and it is not that a child can simply learn to match a particular voice level to a particular activity, person or time. For example, because noise level is collective, it makes a difference whether other children are making noise and how much they are making. That is, two children may be talking in moderately loud voices and not be publicly noticed, but if ten other children add their equally moderate voices, the teacher may then call for attention from all of them.

It is often variations in noise level that get publicly noticed, for example, noisy events that erupt quickly, or noise that is distinguishable in some way. As the following excerpt illustrates, the general noise level can be quite loud, but if a voice is distinguishable above the rest of the class it is likely to be publicly noticed.

EXCERPT 18

Mrs. Barnes had told the children to copy math problems from the board and to work them. She was sitting at her desk. The class was very noisy. About half of the children were talking and laughing. Karen took Melinda's pen, and Melinda said, "Gimme that," her voice rising sharply above the guzz of voices. Mrs. Barnes looked up from her desk and said, "Melinda, get to work. I can hear you all the way up here."

As Mrs. Barnes pointed out to me, voice level is something that is particularly hard for children to learn:

> If there are three groups, a kid can't talk at the same level as if he had the whole class at his attention, because there are other kids who have to talk too within their own group. But if you're reading out of a book or something, it's OK to talk loud. In fact, you must so that your voice carries, But now (within a group) we don't want it to carry. We want it to stay right within where you are. That's really difficult for kids to do because they're used to talking mostly at the same level and it's usually too loud or too soft. Like the kid I was talking to you about who stares into space who's quiet as a mouse. When he reads aloud to the class, he almost whispers.

Mrs. Barnes also pointed out to me that both she and the children have to learn to make instant switches in voice level.:

> I may have just got finished screaming and hollering at the top of my voice at Johnny over there, but when Sally comes, Sally shouldn't have to deal with that. Sally wasn't in that....It's hard for me to do.

> It's like a singer to come from F and drop down to A. And sometimes I have to say, "Now wait a minute. Mrs. Barnes needs time to get herself together." Because I need wait time to drop from F toA.

Mrs. Barnes said that she is trying to develop in the children a voice level that is "reasonable," without teaching them to "sneak:"

> Reasonable" is for me, but "reasonable" is also for society. How do you go to a party and you're going to talk to the fellow. You don't want everybody in the room to hear. Where does it start? It starts in modulation and control of your voice. And not sneaky....I'm not trying to develop sneaking talking. I'm trying to develop a talk level that is OK, so that somebody else can go ahead with what they're doing and not really be interrupted.

Thus, there are certain types of inattention behavior that are more likely to be publicly noticed by the teachers. The complicated issue of noise level is a common denominator of many of the behaviors that are publicly noticed by the teachers.

Behaviors, however, do not exist on their own. Behaviors are done by children, and the kind of child who does the behavior has a great deal to do with what the teacher publicly notices as inattention.

Recall Mrs. Barnes' categories discussed above:

(1) "kids who know when they don't need to pay attention"

(2) "kids who come close to knowing when they don't need to pay attention"

(3) "kids who pay attention almost all the time"

(4) "kids who have a hard time paying attention"

The rest of this section contrasts Mrs. Barnes' response to the same behavior from two children in different categories, and her response to different behavior from two children in the same category.

Wanda is a child whom Mrs. Barnes includes in category (2), "kids who come close to knowing when they don't need to pay attention," children of whom Mrs. Barnes says she doesn't mind when they don't pay attention as long as they already understand what's going on, and as long as they aren't disruptive. Lonnie is a child from category (4). "kids who have a hard time paying attention." Both Wanda and Lonnie are loud talkers, and they both talk a lot, often drawing in two and sometimes three other people. Wanda is a relatively good student. Lonniemakes very low grades. He is loud, fidgety and out of his chair a lot, but his loud and frequent talking is not any louder, ormore frequent, than is Wanda's. It is far more common, however, that Mrs. Barnes calls for Lonnie's attention when he is talking than for Wanda's attention when she is talking. For example, in the following excerpt, Wanda is talking loudly at one table, and Lonnie is talking loudly at another table. Mrs. Barnes tells Lonnie to pay attention because he "needs to hear this."

EXCERPT 19

Mrs. Barnes was at the blackboard at the side of the room explaining a math problem. At a cluster of desks to her right Wanda was talking loudly to the girl who sits beside her. At the cluster of desks to Mrs. Barnes' left, Lonnie was talking loudly to Douglas. Mrs. Barnes stopped what she was doing, turned to Lonnie and said, "Stop that talking, Lonnie, You need to hear this."

In this example, the same behavior, loud talking, is treated differently when it is done by different children, one of whom is categorized by the teacher as coming close to knowing when she doesn't have to pay attention, and one of whom is categorized by the teacher as having a hard time paying attention.

The following discussion contrast different behaviors from Lonnie and Tracey, who are both children Mrs. Barnes categorized as "kids who have a hard time paying attention." Tracey is a very quiet child with a soft voice who spends a lot of time drawing or fiddling with her paper and pencil when she is supposed to be working. She is not a particularly good student, and she often turns in incomplete assignemtns. Lonnie, as we have seen, is a loud and frequent talker who moves around a lot. It is much more common that Mrs. Barnes calls for the attention of Lonnie, and when she does, she often mentions his loudness. (For example, "Lower your voice, Lonnie, and get to work.") In the following excerpt, for example, Mrs. Barnes tells Lonnie to get busy, but she does not tell Tracey to get to work, even though both of them are displaying inattention behavior.

EXCERPT 20

Tracey and Lonnie were sitting at the same table. They were supposed to be doing math problems. Tracey was inking in the face of the photograph on her notebook cover and Lonnie was talking to Jeff and Paula. He grabbed a pencil sharpener from Paula, who grabbed it back and hid it inside her desk. Lonnie reached over to look for the pencil sharpener, pushing on Paula's shoulderto move her out of the way. Mrs. Barnes was walking from the back of the room to the front. As she passed the table where Tracey and Lonnie were sitting she said, "Lonnie, stop that and get busy on your math."

Thus, the teachers are selective in what they publicly notice as inattention. Certain kinds of behavior and certain kinds of behavior from certain kinds of children are more likely to be publicly noticed. The teachers are quite aware that they are selectively paying attention to attention and believe that this is a fact of life that the children need to realize and get used to. Again, thiselectivity is, from the teachers' point of view, necessary for both the teaching and the learning of the lesson. That is, the teachers are stricter on children whom they see as being less able to learn if they arenot attentive, and they are stricter on behaviors they see as disruptive.

(E) Group Attention

Another feature of context that makes a difference in the negotiation of attention in the classroom is that the teachers are often dealing with group attention. In Susan Philips' phrase, the "participant structure" in which the teachers and the students find themselves is different. A student who is part of a group has different attention behavior from a student who is alone with the teacher, and the teacher has different expectations.

For one things, the child's signals of attention are different. If a child is listening as part of a group, he does not give the teacher the head nods and the repetitive "uh huhs" that he does when he is listening in a one to one situation with the teacher. (It is possible to speculate, in fact, that if one child out of a group kept nodding his head and repeating "uh huh," the teacher would think that he was currying her favor or the he was acting fresh.)

It is interesting to notice, however, that a child will sometimes finish an utterance for a teacher, when listening within a group, although the same child will not do so when listening alone to the teacher. In such cases, attention behavior includes anticipating what the teacher is going to say and filling in pauses or blanks, or saying it along with her, as illustrated in Excerpt 21 below. This is done very softly, almost under the breath, and is not picked up by the teacher and worked into the interaction.

EXCERPT 21

Mrs. Barnes is standing by the blackboard and Sammy and Shelley are sitting side by side at a cluster of desks in the middle of the room. Mrs. Barnes is explaining to the class what she wants included in the definitions she has asked them to write for their spelling words. As the teacher says the following sentence: "When I say 'write definitions," that means phonetic spelling AND parts of speech," Sammy and Shelley join in at two places, speaking softly along with the teacher. As soon as the teacher begins the word "spelling," Sammy and then Shelley repeat "spelling." The teacher continues alone for a couple of words and then Sammy finishes the rest of the sentence along with her: "of speech."

1. Teacher: When I say "write definitions" that means
2. phonetic spelling AND part of speech.
3. Sammy: spelling of speech
4. Shelley: spelling

This behavior is distinct from the children's responding to the common teaching technique in which the teacher consciously pauses and waits for the children to finish a sentence that she starts, as illustrated in the following excerpt. In this case, the children's response is acknowledge and worked into the ineraction.

EXCERPT 22

Mrs. Barnes is teaching a lesson nutrition. She is asking the kids questions about a pamphlet they have read.

Teacher: The other vitamin we need is (her voice trails off expectantly into the oral equivalent of a blank to be filled in.)
Child: B
Child: B
Teacher: Vitamin B

Another difference between group attention and inidividual attention is in the way the teacher calls for attention. This is related to the general problem of managing two verbal interactions at the same time. If a teacher is teaching a lesson and finds that she needs to call for attention, she is faced with the problem of managing two interactions: the business of getting attention and the business of teaching the lesson. She has to minimize as much as possible the catch-22 implications of the fact that in calling for attention she interrupts what she wants the children to be paying attention to. What she does depends partly upon whether she is faced with inattention behavior from one or two individuals wihtin the group or with inattention behavior from the whole group or a large part of it.

If it is the case of inattention behavior from only one or two individuals, she is liekly to call for attention in a parenthetical way that briefly puts the lesson on hold, but that does not really interrupt the flow of the lesson. For example, she may insert a name or a sentence (for example, "Sam, are you listening?") into the flow of the lesson and continue right around it.

Another way the teachers have of managing the inattention behavior of one or two individuals parenthetically without interrupting the lesson for very long is to handle the inattention behavior nonverbally. Mrs. Barnes, for example, has a way of staring at a child and wrinkling up the skin at the sides of her eyes that lets the child know she want him to pay attention. However, as Mrs. Barnes pointed out to me, children have to learn to respond to her nonverbal signals. She said that she has to start out the year with explicit verbal requests for attention, and that as she and the students get to know each other, she is able to use more nonverbal reqeusts. In the following excerpt she contrasts her previous class with her new class:

> I handle [inattention nonverbally] after I get to know my kids. I would not handle it that way if I did not know my kids, because you have to first start with them orally or they will act like they don't understand what you are doing with the sign language, when in fact they do. That's a step by step process that happens in my head. With these kids I rarely signal to them nonverbally to do something, because they don't know me well enough to know what my nonverbal signals are. OK, the kids I had last year know me well enough to know. Ok, take eye to eye contact. With some ofmy kids [in the previous class] if they were doing the wrong thing they knew that meant it was time to cut that out and go on to something else. With these kids [the new class] they might just think that I am looking at them. And one kid has, with these kids, asked me "Why are you staring at me," you know, which is a valid question. So that it's comfortable for me, with kids over a period of time, and it does take time.

Sometimes the teacher combines the business of managing attention and the business of teaching the lesson by calling on a child she believes is not paying attention and asking him a question related to the lesson. She usually calls the name first to get the child's attention, and then asks the questions. Such a technique may slow down the lesson, however, since if the child wasn't listening, it is likely that he won't be able to answer. Here the identity of the child makes a difference in the technique that the teacher chooses. For examplE,if it is a low ability child who is being inattentive, the teacher does not try to get his attention by asking a questions about the lesson.

The teachers do have ways to combine the business of managing attention and the business of teaching the lesson without risking asking a question of a child who probably doesn't know the answer. For example, they might use the event of the inattention as an occasion to restate the topic of a part of the lesson, as the excerpt below illustrates. The teacher is trying to get the children to give her a definition of the work "task." Joe is talking to another child. The teacher lets him know that his inattentive behavior has been noticed. She does so with a sentence that restates for both him and the class the topic of this part of the lesson. However, she does not call on Joe to answer anything.

EXCERPT 23

Mrs. Barnes is asking the class for a definition of the word "task." Several different students have given answers that are only partly satisfactory, and the teacher is still looking for an answer, calling on students who have raised their hands. Joe is talking to the girl who sits across from him. Mrs. Barnes says, "Are you thinking, Joe, about what a task is?" Then she calls immediately on Beatice, who hand is raised.

Excerpt 24 below is similar in that the teacher lets Jim know that his inattentive behavior has been noticed by using a sentence that tells both him and the class at what paragraph they should be looking in order to find the answer she wants. But she doesn't ask Jim to answer anything; she calls instead on Roy.

EXCERPT 24

Mrs. Barnes is teaching a lesson about nutrition from a pamphlet that each child has in front of him. She is asking the children what nutrients come from the milk group. The answer is found in a paragraph printed inside of a yellow block at one corner of the page. One child has said "vitamin A," and another child has just said "protein," and the teacher is trying to get the children to say the other nutrients listed in that paragraph. Jim is talking to the boy who sits beside him:

Teacher: Protein, Ok, we've got protein, vitamin A, what else? There's something else that's reeeaally important. Jim, are you with us in the yellow with the milk group, I hope. What else do we get?
Roy: Vitamin D.
Teacher: Vitamin D comes from there. Yes, usually A and D go together.

Thus, the teachers have certain ways of calling for attention if they are dealing with the inattentive behavior of only a few individuals within a group, ways that take into account which individuals it is, and that minimize the interruption of the lesson by placing it only briefly on hold or by combining the business of teaching the lesson with the business of managing attention.

It if is the whole group or a large part of it who are not paying attention, the teacher is more likely to do something that stops the lesson, resets the tone, and then starts the lesson again. For example, one of Mrs. Barnes' most common techniques is to turn off the lights so that the children have to "freeze" their mouths and bodies. She waits for attentive behavior, and then continues the lesson.

Both techniques interrupt the lesson for a relatively long time, and sometimes require some backtracking and summarizing to get the lesson started again.

Even with very long waits, it is sometimes the case that the lesson in put on hold and picked up again exactly where the teacher left it. For example, I have seen Mrs. Barnes stop dramatically in the middle of a word, stare at the class for a long time and then pick up again at the exact syllable where she stopped. Stopping in the middle of a word in this way is an effective way to call attention to what she is doing. Starting up again with a particular syllable is likewise dramatic enough to command a little extra attention as she continues with what she is saying.

Thus, when teachers are faced with the problem of handling two interactions, that is, managing inattention behavior and teaching a lesson, the way they call for attention depends upon whether or not they are dealing with a group or with a few individuals within the group, and it depends upon the identity of the individuals. Here, as elsewhere, the teachers display a fine-grained awareness of detail and context regarding attention, an awareness that is in the service of their ability to manage the class. That is, for the teachers to be so aware of these facets of attention makes it easier for them to manage the class.

Another difference between group attention and individual attention is that in a group responsibility for listening is somewhat diffuse. That is, if a teacher is talking to an individual child, that child has all of the responsibility for holding up one end of the interaction. However, if a teacher is talking to a group, the responsibility for listening is shared. The interaction can continue even if not all of the children are listening. This allows compromises to be made between the teacher and the children. The teacher does not need attention behavior from all of the children in order to continue.

One situation in which such compromise can be observed is when Mrs. Barnes stops in mid-sentence and waits for attention. I have seen her wait for as long as three minutes, sitting on a child's chair, arms folded, ankles crossed, staring at the floor. The children know exactly what she is waiting for, and some of them use the opportunity to issue commands to the whole class. (For example, "Shut up." "Shut up ya'll, Mrs. Barnes is waiting." "Be quiet." "You know Mrs. Barnes is waiting for ya'll. Ya'll gonna be staying after school.") However, with a group of thirty-three children, it is almost never the case that the teacher will get everyone's attention, even in such a dramatic situation. Things are in limbo.

The teacher is waiting for attention, and usually the room is getting quieter, but even so, she is not usually getting all the attention that she is asking for. But she can't wait forever. The teacher has to decide where to draw the line between insisting on the attention she is asking for, and getting on with the lesson. Sometimes the teacher gets a little help from the children. For example, it often happens that a child will ask a procedural question (for example, "Mrs. Barnes, what page are we on?") and the teacher will answer it and then continue with whatever she was doing before she started waiting for attention.

Thus, we again find the teachers being as strict regarding attention as they need to be to conduct their business. With a group not everyone has to pay attention for the teacher to teach, since there are other children to take up the slack.

(F) General Summary

These teachers consider attention to be a problem in their classrooms, a problem with consequences for their own ability to teach and for the children's ability to learn. It is necessary, therefore, to ask what counts as attention for these two teachers.

To decide if a child is paying attention the teachers depend upon physical signals related to control of the mouth, eyes and body and they also infer attention from a child's work. They say that they put more faith in a child's work than in his behavioral signs of attention, a faith underlain by the connection between attention and learning that is the basis of their concern with attention in the first place.

As we have seen, however, the teachers' inference of attention or innattention from a child's work is not based upon a belief that learning is ipso facto proof of attention. The teachers know that there can be attention without understanding and understanding without constant attention. What they are leaving out when they can infer attention from a child's work is an intervening variable: the individual child. That is, the teacher brings to her interpretation of a child's work all her prior knowledge of the child. If the work is not done correctly and if the child is categorized as one who has trouble paying attention, the teacher is much more likely to infer inattention than if she is looking at the work of a child who always pays attention.

To find out what counts as attention to these teachers, it is necessary to find out what counts in different contexts. For these teachers, there are degrees of appropriate attention that vary, for example, by the activity to which attention should be paid, the person to whom attention should be paid, and by whether or not the child is in a group. There is a difference between what the teachers perceive as inattention and what they publicly notice, so that certain children and certain behaviors are more likely to be publicly noticed than others.

Attention is an ever-shifting, highly selective phenomenon, with the teacher as a spotlight, focusing on what she feels is necessary for both teaching and learning. The degrees of attention she requires for different activities of the day and for her own personal tolerances, as well as the types of inattention behavior and the types of children that she chooses to publicly notice all serve her purpose of making it easier for herself to teach and easier for the children to learn. The teacher is as strict in her idea of appropriate levels of attention and as selective in what she chooses to notice as she feels she needs to be to accomplish her dual job -- teaching, which includes a flip side for the children, learning.

The teachers have a fine-grained awareness of context and detail regarding attention, an awareness that also serves their purpose of making it easier for themselves to teach.

III. CLASSROOMS (2): WITH FOCUS ON THE CHILDREN'S INTERACTION

(A) Mock challenge and response

Given how the teachers infer attention, what they count as attention in different contexts and their tendencies and likelinesses regarding the management of attention behavior, what happens when the children engage in certain patterns of interaction? This section looks at one such pattern, a pattern of mock adversary challenges and responses, in terms of its consequences for the negotiation of attention in the classroom.

The kind of talk in the following excerpts is common in these two classrooms, and, as the excerpts illustrate, is often involved in incidents where the teacher calls for attention. This is not the only kind of talk that is noticed as inattentive. Neither is this kind of talk always interrupted by a teacher calling for attention; the teachers allow many of these exchanges to work themselves out. The talk is common enough and distinctive enough, however, to be part of any description of these classrooms, and it is called down by the teachers often enough to need to be taken into account in regard to attention.

EXCERPT 25

Mrs. Barnes is standing at the blackboard writing the homework assignment, which includes a long list of spelling words. The class is copying the homework from the blackboard. At one cluster of desks are sitting:

ANNA	SHELLEY	THERESA	LONNIE
JEFF	PAULA		

Jeff: (Whispers to Theresa) Can I hold your pencil sharpener?
(The pencil sharpener is sitting on Paula's notebook.)
Theresa: (To Paula) Let 'im hold it.
Paula: (To Jeff) (Loudly) Use your own pencil sharpener.
Jeff: So you stole it.
Paula: I do not got your pencil sharpener. I do not.
Theresa: Just shup up.
Jeff: So you're a thief.
Paula: Boy, you better get out of my face.
Jeff: (Sings very softly and breathily) Hellloooo.
Paula: (Softly) Bye.
Jeff: (Sings) Lemme dummm no. Lemme dummm no.

EXCERPT 26

Ten minutes later. The children are still copying their homework from the blackboard.

Paula: (In a high squeaky voice) Can we ( ) off now?
Jeff: You're tryin' to be funny. You funny lookin'
freckle face.
Paula: You're another one.
Jeff: Freckle face teeth. (Laughs)
Paula: That's why they call you Blackie.
Jeff: I'm proud.
Lonnie: Everybody's proud to be black.
Paula: You black thing.
Jeff: Buncha teeth ( ) like a yellow snowmonster.
Paula: Shut up. You talk
like ( ).
Jeff: Like you ain't brown, girl.
Paula: Yes, I am.
Lonnie: You better shup up.
Jeff: Right.
Paula: Right, my foot.

18 Jeff: If I was black, I'd be this color. (Taps tape recorder.)
19 Paula: You is that color.
20 Lonnie: (Sharply, loudly) Shut up.
21 Paula: Shut up.
22 Jeff: Yellow teeth snow monster.
23 Paula: | ( ) across the street ( )
24 Jeff: OK, after school. After school I'm gonna punch you
25 right in the ( )
26 Paula: Get out of my face, boy. I'm tellin' you.
27 Jeff: Uh uh. After- off a ( )

The teacher looks up from her desk across the room to the cluster of desks where Jeff and Paula are talking:

28 Mrs. Barnes: OK you have five minutes to finish. Let's go.
29 Paula: I'll be home. ( ) get off the Dooby Brothers.
30 Jeff: I can get off dooby any time.
31 Paula: No, you can't.

Mrs. Barnes looks up from her desk again, frowns at Paula, and tells her:

32 Mrs. Barnes: Talk less, Miss James, and write more.

Paula and Jeff both stop talking and begin copying their homework.

A lot has been written about the verbal skill of black Americans, often focusing on the competitive and witty aspects of a group of related ways of speaking sometimes glossed as "gaming," "signifying," or, in Roger Abrahams' phrase, "aggressive, witty performance talk" (1976:46). This family of talk includes a number of genres, such as rounds of boasts or bluffs, direct or indirect taunts, and ritual insults directed at other participants or at their relatives. (See, for example, Folb 1980, Kochman 1976, Labov 1972, Abrahams 1976, Mitchell-Kernan 1972.) There is great variation in the literature and in black communities themselves as to the terms for these kinds of talk, as to the meanings and uses of the terms, and as to the relations among them, such as, for example, whether "sounding" and "signifying" are interchangeable names, two different things, or "sounding" one kind of "signifying."

What I am examining here is not a single genre, but rather a framework of mock aggressive challenges and responses within which the children employ a number of distinguishable genres. This pattern of interaction is a loosely organized series of mock adversary exchanges that convey a verbal assertiveness, an unwillingness to let someone get away with something, a quickness to accuse and to defend. The exchanges have characteristic discourse and paralinguistic features, and are a matter of form, not of specific content. The exchanges are a way of speaking in which many kinds of things can be done, including some that are attentive to the children's school work.

Because this framework of challenges and responses can include a number of genres, it will be helpful to look at some of the themes that a number of the genres discussed in the literature on black ways of speaking have in common. Four such themes are talk as play, talk as contest, talk as performance and talk as control.

As Claudia Mitchell-Kernan says, "concern with verbal art is a dominant theme in black culture" (1972; 165). Many black ways of speaking are seen as artful exercises, playful contests in which one of the goals is to have a good time. It is an ambiguous type of play that sometimes keeps observers and participants wondering if it is still play. Because these verbal games are "commonly carried out by the use of the same aggressive, hostile, formulaic devices found in real arguments--i.e., the same curses, boasts, devices of vilification and degradation, etc.," the observer often "has a hard time discerning whether joking or a real argument is taking place. Indeed, it becomes an important part of the show on many occasions to keep even the other participants wondering whether one is still playing" (Abrahams 1976; 41).

Many black ways of talking are seen as contests in which the players gain status by verbally outmaneuvering each other. They are "contests of wills and wits...in which the contestants creatively do battle with each other, often in front of appreciative third parties (Folb 1980; 88). As Mitchell-Kernan says, "the message often carries some negative import for the addressee" (1972; 168). But again, although the contests may look and sound hostile, "like other games and contests, they are infused with high spirit, parries and thrusts, creative and resourceful gambits and a pervasive sense of playfulness" (Folb 1980; 89).

Many such ways of talking are seen as performances in a culture where there is not a sharp distinction between performance and other kinds of interaction. "Because of the focus on talk-as-performance, a feeling develops that the talker in public settings is potentially "on" all the time--that is, verbal behavior will be judged as if it were a performance and the speaker judged as if he were on stage. This means that virtually any conversation may turn into a routine or something else equally dramatic" (Abrahams 1976; 18).

Many such ways of talking share an element of control, control both over the self and over others. "It is this element of control, of the power of words well used, and of the status one can achieve through good talking, that is perhaps the most difficult aspect of Black oral culture for Euro-Americans to fanthom" (Abrahams 1976; 84). Self control is also valued in a "verbal 'aesthetic of the cool,' a program of interaction which stresses ability to assert control in the midst of noise and contest, through an ability to keep your wits about you and to capitalize on whatever opportunities arise" (Abrahams 1976; 84-85).

Most of what has been written on black ways of speaking concerns talk between adolescent boys or older men, often focussing on the more ritualized and stylized types of talk, and tending to deal with talk on the streets. Here we are concerned with what happens when children, girls as well as boys, employ a playful, mock aggressive pattern of challenges and responses, in the classroom, and focuses especially upon the consequences for attention behavior.

These mock adversary challenges and responses are part of what gives these classrooms their particular flavor and character. The children have other characteristic patterns of interaction that contribute to a sense of these classrooms as individual places. Some of these will be discussed later as part of a description of the mock adversary exchanges and their use in the classroom. For example, the children use a number of acts, genres and routines to express, for instance, self-praise:

> Check it out.
>
> I'm the best in the west.

or to encourage other children:

> Sing your song. Sing it Leroy. (The class had just finished chorusing out spelling words as the teacher repeated each one. When they finished; Leroy softly sang the words, "You gotta listen to me," and a girl at another table said, "Sing your song. Sing it Leroy.")
>
> Tell 'im about it, Cindy. (A girl was defending herself against a boy's accusations that she was bothering him. A girl who was listening told the first girl, "Tell 'im about it, Cindy.")

Some of the expressions are routinized and others are new to the moment. The expressions can come and go. For example, at the beginning of the year, many children were saying "Check it out." A number of months later, you didn't hear "Check it out," in the classroom, but by that time a lot of children were saying "Get out of my face," to mean "stop talking and leave me alone."

As we will see, some of these routines and expressions are worked into the framework of mock adversary challenges and responses. It is common, for example, for a child who is listening to such a mock adversary exchange to step in with encouragement for one or another of the parties.

A second pattern of interaction in these classrooms is that there is frequently an oral component to the children's attention to such tasks as reading, writing and art projects.

A third pattern is that the children rather constantly monitor each other in class and comment on each other's progress. They know what each other are up to and what is on each other's papers, not just because they look, but also because they listen. For example, the verbal accompaniment to physical tasks mentioned above helps the children monitor each other's work.

As we will see, this monitoring sometimes interacts with the mock adversary challenges and responses to create a situation in which a child monitors another child's work, finds something wrong, steps in to explain or to correct and does so in a mock adversary manner. As we will also see, the teachers can mistake such cases for inattention.

As Section IV will show, this oral, collaborative attention behavior is part of a general pattern of oral, collaborative attention in the community.

(B) A Description

The children have names for this pattern of mock adversary exchanges: "bad talk,"[1] "smart talk," "being smart," "smart mouthing," "trying to be bad," "trying to be cool," "somebody runnin' other people's business." They contrast this kind of talk with "regular talking:" "In regular talking you be nice, this talking means you be cool." The children also contrast this talk with "fighting:" "It don't come to fighting. Ain't nobody hitting nobody. You're just talking, smart mouthing, you're just trying to be cool." At the beginning of the year I didn't realize that these exchanges would not lead to fights. Once when I stepped in to stop one, a girl explained to me that it wasn't necessary:

EXCERPT 27

I walked into the classroom at lunchtime. About ten children were sitting around eating their packaged lunches. William and Nessa were standing at the back of the room, and I walked over to them. William told me that school would be over at 2:00 today. Nessa turned her face to him as she snapped out: "2:15." William lifted his fist as if to hit her, and I involuntarily reached out to catch his hand. Nessa stepped back, relaxed her face and laughed. She said, still looking at him: "He wasn't going to hit me."

This kind of talk is something that is fun. As a child told, "It's having fun.... Usually both people like every bit of it." As we will see, it often ends in laughing or in playing around with sounds or with objects.

---

[1] A child told me, "when we say bad we mean good." See Folb 1980 for a discussion of words in black usage that have opposite meanings, depending upon context.

The children may not have much choice about getting swept up into one of these exchanges once the challenge is issued. As one child told me, "You have to answer or you're a punk." Another child said, "If you don't answer back, they'll keep picking at you."

These mock adversary exchanges have their own discourse rhythm. As excerpt 28 below illustrates and as chart 1 below summarizes, the stages can be seen as a challenge, a response, the body of the exchange, and a dissolution. The challenge is usually an accusation or a provocation directive. The response follows immediately, loudly, sometimes explosively, and is usually a denial, a counter-accusation, a directive or a so-what-I-don't-care statement. The body consists of a few or a number of moves that also have a mock adversary quality, for example, more accusations, insults, mock threats, and, in return, denials, insults, counterclaims. At this stage, other children sometimes join in, encouraging one or the other of the participants or making their own accusations.

These exchanges do not lead to fights and they do not escalate forever. What usually happens is that the exchanges dissolve in one of three ways: the children begin playing or laughing, they move casually on to another topic, or the teacher calls for attention. That could be the end of it; it is also likely that the same participants will erupt again within a few minutes into a new exchange. It sometimes happens that children sitting at the same table will keep up an intermittent series of exchanges over a period of several hours.

CHART 1

MOCK ADVERSARY EXCHANGES

CHALLENGE	ACCUSATION, or DIRECTIVE
RESPONSE	DENIAL, COUNTER ACCUSATION, DIRECTIVE, or SO-WHAT-I-DON'T-CARE STATEMENT
BODY	COMBINATIONS OF DENIALS, COUNTERCLAIMS, JOKING INSULTS, MOCK THREATS OTHER CHILDREN CAN INTERJECT ENCOURAGING STATEMENTS, or MORE ACCUSATIONS
DISSOLUTION	VERBAL PLAY OR LAUGHTER CHANGING THE TOPIC, or TEACHER CALLING FOR ATTENTION

At their most basic, the exchanges can consist of only a challenge and one response, but they are often quite elaborated as the following excerpts illustrate. In excerpt 28 below, Cindy and Theresa are talking. Jeff steps in with a provocative directive ("Why don't you just shut up."). Then the children exchange a series of accusations, directives, counter accusations and denials. A third child, Theresa, steps in twice on behalf of Cindy, with a directive to Jeff ("Hey, you better leave her alone, Jeff.") and with encouragement for Cindy ("Tell 'im about it, Cindy.") The exchange dissolves when the three children start playing with laughing noises.

EXCERPT 28

Mrs. Barnes announces that it is time for reading class and gives the whole class directions for a reading exercise. Then she walks over to a reading group at the front of the room. Sitting in a reading group at the back of the room are the following children. Yesterday some of the girls had put on make-up at recess. Cindy is talking to Theresa about the make-up:

	THERESA	CINDY	SONIA	PAMMY
JEFF	LONNIE	MATTIE	MARLENE	WANDA

Cindy: (to Theresa) You gonna dress up in
that make-up today and act crazy?

CHALLENGE (Directive)

Jeff: (to Cindy) Why don't you just shup up?

RESPONSE (Directive)

Cindy: Why don't you shup up? You ain't
my mother.

BODY

Jeff: I am your father.
Theresa: Hey, you better leave her alone, Jeff.
She ain't doin' nothin' to you.
Jeff: She better leave me alone.
Cindy: I ain't messin' with you.

11 Jeff: You're talkin' to me/
12 Cindy: So you jumped in my conversation.
13 Jeff: You jumped in my face.
14 Cindy: I did not.
15 Theresa: Tell 'im about it Cindy.

Cindy starts laughing and soon all three kids are playing with funny little laughing noises:

DISSOLUTION

16 Cindy, Jeff, Theresa: HHUG. HHUG. HHUG.
17 Whook.
18 Nohg! Nohg! Nohg!
19 EEEE. EEEEEE.

In excerpt 29 below, Cindy accuses Jeff of having broken a pencil point in the pencil sharpener. Jeff responds with a denial and then a provocative directive ("I did not. Cindy, why don't you shut up?"). A three way exchange follows, with Mattie talking about the pencil sharpener, and with Cindy and Jeff making accusations and denials, overriding each other's denials, making claims and counterclaims, and with Jeff calling Cindy names ("Dumb nothin' head"). The exchange dissolves when Cindy's attention is drawn to a fourth girl, who wants help with her workbook page.

EXCERPT 29

The children are working at their desks on a workbook page, which Mrs. Barnes has said she will come around later to check. Mattie is trying to get a small plastic pencil sharpener to work.

	THERESA	CINDY	SONIA	PAMMY
JEFF	LONNIE	MATTIE	MARLENE	WANDA

Mattie: This pencil sharpener don't work.

CHALLENGE
(Accusation)

Cindy: Told you. He tried to be so cool yesterday and broke a point in there.

RESPONSE
(Denial, and directive)

Jeff: I did not. Cindy, why don't you shut up.

BODY

Mattie: It don't work.

Cindy: (To Jeff) Yeah, you did. See, a pencil point got stuck right there somewhere. (Takes the sharpener.)

Jeff: Dumb nothin' head.

Mattie: Let me see. Let me s-

Cindy: Now when you break it it gets stuck.

Mattie: Ain't no pencil, pencil point in there.

Cindy: I took it out.

Jeff: Tell her, Mattie, tell her.

Cindy: I took it out.

Jeff: You ain't take nothin' out.

Cindy: I did too.

Jeff: You did not. Lonnie took it out yesterday. Why don't you, you always lie. (Mutters under his breath.) Lyin'.

DISSOLUTION

25 Sonia: (To the table at large, concerning
26 the workbook page) I still don't
27 understand. Marlene told me one
28 but I still don't understand.

Sonia and Cindy begin to talk about the workbook page.

The less supervision from the teachers, the more frequent are these exchanges. Thus, the exchanges are most likely to occur during "down time," when the children are in between official classroom activities. In fact, whenever there is down time, unless it is quite fleeting, there is almost always at least one of these exchanges going on somewhere in the room, and often as many as five or six are going on at the same time. The exchanges during down time are often louder and last longer than those that happen at other times during the day.

The next most common time for these exchanges is when the children are working on their own at their desks. In a twenty-five minute period there may be 15-20 of these exchanges, with some going on at the same time.

The next most common time for these exchanges is while the teacher is teaching a lesson. Such exchanges are usually shorter and much quieter, but they are still quite common. Here there is a marked difference between the two teachers' classes. In Mrs. Barnes' room there may be seven or eight of the exchanges in a 25 minute period, whereas in Mrs. Lindley's room there may be only one or two. As we have seen, Mrs. Lindley runs a quieter classroom and is quicker to call down talking.

The least common time for these exchanges is when the teacher is sitting at the same table with a group of children. Here the exchanges are quite rare, and when they do occur they are fleeting and abbreviated, usually just a quick accusation and a denial.

Not all children use this adversary style in the classroom, but many of them do, including both children whom the teachers categorize as "good students," and children they categorize as "low in ability." Even fairly quiet children participate in these exchanges, but they are more likely to take supporting roles than principal roles. In excerpt 28, for example, Cindy and Jeff take the principal roles. Jeff tells Cindy to shut up, which starts the exchange, and the two of them trade claims, accusations and denials until the exchange finally dissolves when the children begin to play with funny noises. Wanda, a quiet child, steps in twice on behalf of Cindy, once to tell Jeff to leave Cindy alone ("Hey, you better leave her alone, Jeff. She ain't doin' nothin' to you.") and once to encourage Cindy ("Tell 'im about it, Cindy."). These exchanges almost always occur in front of at least several other children. Children do not use this style of talking with teachers.

The exchanges are extremely common between boys and girls, and some of the most vigorous and imaginative exchanges take place between boys and girls, leading me to believe that one function of this style of discourse for boys and girls of this age is to allow them to show interest in each other without admitting that they are showing interest. These sixth graders are at just the age when such ambiguity seems to be necessary.

These exchanges have a tone of mock aggression, joking, competition and escalation, in which the best defense is to seize the offensive role, for example, to counter an insult with another insult, or a directive with a more provocative directive.

The children use a number of verbal techniques as they maneuver with each other, each trying to turn the exchange to his own advantage. For example, they may turn a joking insult into a compliment. In excerpt 26 (at lines 6-7) when Paula tells Jeff "That's why they call you Blackie," Jeff responds with, "I'm proud," and his seatmate says, "Everybody's proud to be black."

Exaggeration is another technique that the children use. In excerpt 26, for example, (at line 19) Paula and Jeff are trading comments about skin color, and Paula tells Jeff that he is the color of the tape recorder, which is black plastic.

Questioning the other person's right to interfere is another technique. In excerpt 28 (at lines 4-5), Cindy tells Jeff he has no right to tell her what to do since he isn't her mother: "Why don't *you* shut up? You ain't my mother." Making clever, patently false statements is another technique. When Cindy tells Jeff to shut up because he isn't her mother, he counters with "I *am* your father."

Another technique is to bring up an embarrassing topic. In excerpt 35, which will be discussed later, Jeff and Wanda trade a series of accusations. Jeff accuses Wanda of doing sloppy work. Wanda accuses Jeff of not even getting his work done, and Jeff counters with the fact that Wanda wet her pants the day before.

These mock adversary exchanges are often quite loud and very high pitched. Because the exchanges escalate so quickly, the noise often comes in sharp bursts. Individual voices can often be heard above the buzz of the rest of the class. There is often a strident, righteous tone to these exchanges.

Girls can be just as loud and strident as boys, but girls sometimes lower their voices and use a modulated, taunting tone that seems to emphasize their own control over themselves and the situation, and which makes the boys' loud, high pitched outbursts seem somewhat out of control by contrast.

Timing is part of what makes this style of talk sound so adversarial. The children often do not wait for the end of an utterance, but begin to talk before the other person is finished. Also, a piece of talk can escalate in seconds from something quite unobtrusive into something very loud.

I often had the sense that the children physically crowd each other when they use this style of talking. However, when I tried to find concrete examples, I couldn't see that they actually move any closer to each other. I was convinced that there was something to my feeling, however, because the children themselves use physical crowding imagery. For example, in excerpt 25 above (at line 9), Paula tells Jeff, who is sitting at least four or five feet away from her across the table, "Boy, you better get out of my face." And in excerpt 28 above (at line 12) when Cindy tells Jeff, "So, you jumped in my conversation," he replies, "You jumped in my face." I finally decided that it is the paralinguistic features of loudness, strident high pitch and rapid fire timing that contribute to a sense of physical crowding. The children press upon each other verbally with sound and with timing, and it helps create an impression of physical crowding.

(C) Consequences for attention: "How can you be doing your work when you're talking that foolish talk?"

Both teachers spend a lot of time and energy dealing with these mock adversary exchanges. It is not that the teachers call for attention every time there is a mock adversary exchange. They allow many of them simply to work themselves out, again following their principle of being as strict as they need to be to accomplish their job. The teachers are more likely, for example, to let an exchange work itself out while the children are working at their desks than while the teacher is teaching a lesson.

If, however, all the behaviors that the teachers publicly notice as inattentive could be ranked in order of how commonly the teachers do something about them, these adversary exchanges would be near the top, below things like actual fights or a child getting up out of his seat while the teacher is teaching a lesson, but above things like loud talking or playing.

This is partly because of the nature of the behavior itself, which is loud and strident, does draw in other children, and can last a long time. Because the exchanges escalate quickly, the noise comes in sharp bursts. And it often happens that in the heat of an exchange, individual voices can be heard above the general buzz of the rest of the class. As we have seen, all of these are things that make it more likely that the teacher will publicly do something about a piece of behavior she considers inattentive.

In calling for attention during a mock adversary exchange, the teachers sometimes make explicit their objection to its loudness or its disruption and the consequences for conducting the lesson, as the following excerpt illustrates.

EXCERPT 30

Mrs. Lindley's class was divided into reading groups. Mrs. Lindley was listening to one group take turns reading paragraphs. The next table was doing a workbook exercise. That group suddenly got much louder. From my chair at the side of the room I heard Howard and Olga's voices:

Olga: Get your fingers off my paper.
Howard: I ain't touching your paper.
Olga: What's that then?
Howard: I ain't touching your paper.
Olga: I'll break your bones.
Howard: You'll be flying up to heaven.

Mrs. Lindley looked over at the group and said, "Stop that noise and get to work. We can't even think."

The nature of the behavior then, has consequences for the management of attention in the classroom. The teachers' perceptions also have consequences. Both teachers consider the exchanges to be part of the children's normal repertoire of talking, but to belong outside of the classroom. Mrs. Barnes calls the exchanges "street language," as opposed to "school language," and told me:

> This is par for the course, par for the age group, and par for the neighborhood. This is the kind of conversation that just goes on.
>
> It's like a ritual. This is like part of a ritual... because all the kids do it; it's part of where they live, and it's part of playing the dozens, only this isn't as serious as the dozens, but it's all part of that same kind of track.

Neither teacher feels the mock adversary exchanges are appropriate in class. As Mrs. Lindley told me:

> It's out of place (in class). It's OK at lunch time or free time.... To me it would just be silly (in class). When you're sixth graders you know a little right from wrong. By the time they are sixth graders they know they need to work as hard as they can. Acting like that is not going to get them into junior high.
>
> It's not really OK in class, because I try to get them to talk about things that are more constructive. That's just silly talk. It's nonsense to me. Maybe now and then it's OK. But they have other experiences they can talk about and can get a laugh out of without talking silly.

And as Mrs. Barnes told me:

> The classroom to me should be part of a living world. the things that should be learned there do not only come out of a book, but kids also need to learn those things that will help them to succeed in a world outside, or in addition to, where they live on their street.
>
> If I'm effective, my job is to get them to see that they can eliminate (the mock adversary exchanges), that it's not necessary for their survival. It might be a colorful part of it, but not necessary for their survival in class and in the larger world. There are

> other ways they can handle these situations. There are other ways that are more acceptable in the larger society. ...The reason you want to eliminate this is it's too touchy. It leaves too many ends open. ...But I don't ban it. The reason why I allow it to exist is because that's the level at which they are. To get to the level that I want them to go, they must start at where they are.

As the above quotes suggest, the teachers have different ideas about the value of this kind of talk. Mrs. Barnes feels that the children learn something by participating in these exchanges. As she told me after listening to a tape of excerpt 27 in which Jeff's telling Cindy to "shut up" starts an adversary exchange:

> Cindy's thing to learn is that she can talk this way and not get into trouble physically, meaning, fight. Jeff's thing to get out of it was, probably, in sixth grade, he just wanted Cindy's attention, because she was a new girl in the class and kinda cute.
>
> A lot of it is that they are beginning adolescence. Most of it is social. It's learning how to deal in this world socially so that you can talk with people, so that you know what behaviors work. It's how to control conversation. It's how to stop impending danger. It's all of those things and it can't be learned by being quiet.

Mrs. Lindley, on the other hand, calls it "silly talk:"

> It's just plain silly. It's just to get a rise out of someone, to make them want to answer. Some people just like to get people started. They say something that they know will upset the person. This is what they want. Some children would just ignore them, but most won't. Some kids just like to keep things going; they don't like it to be too calm. They say one little thing to get things started.

Both teachers told me that low ability children do more of this kind of talking in class than do higher ability children. Mrs. Barnes, for example, said:

> Rarely do I find a bright kid who deals with this (who talks this way) often or close to often in the classroom. I'm not saying they don't deal with it, but usually it's confined to recess, after school, that sort of thing. Because there is a kind of line that

> their parents have been able to establish with them that that's not the kind of behavior that should happen in the classroom.

What I found to be the case, however, is that both high and low ability children participate in these exchanges, as discussed above, but that the teachers more commonly call down low ability children. This is perhaps as much a case of selective remembering as it is selective perception, since at the time the behavior is occuring, the teachers do call down high ability children, although not as often as they do lower ability children.

Both teachers feel that the mock adversary exchanges are inattentive; they say that they take the children away from the work they are supposed to be doing and are a serious drain on class time. As Mrs. Barnes told me:

> I would rather not have this in class. It takes up time that I could better put to use doing something else. It takes up a lot of class time. At the beginning of the year, it's horrendous.
>
> The kids can't do this and do school work. The kids I have by and large would not be able to jot something down. They have to apply all of their attention to their work in order to get it done.
>
> This (way of talking) takes a whole emotional kind of involvement. It doesn't take a terrible lot of thought because it's kind of repetitive, and it's kind of ingrained, and they do it so often. But it takes a whole emotional kind of "what am I going to say next?" So it does take them away.

As suggested by the following excerpt, discussed in Part II and presented again here, the teachers' assumption is "how can you be doing your work when you are talking that way:"

EXCERPT 10

Mrs. Lindley's class was divided into reading groups. Mrs. Lindley was sitting with one group, listening to them take turns reading aloud. The teacher's aide was sitting with another group, going over the answers to a workbook exercise. At a third group the children were working on a workbook exercise. The class was fairly noisy, with lots of people talking and with a few children playing with baseball cards and with pencils and pencil sharpeners. At the third group I heard two children's voices rise above the buzz of the rest of the class:

Vanessa: He always do that.
Willie: Oh, shut up.
Vanessa: You shut up before I beat your rump.

Mrs. Lindley looked over at them and said, "How can you be doing your work when you're talking that foolish talk?"

The examples so far have been mock adversary exchanges that do seem to take the children away from the instructional task at hand. However, this style of interaction is a matter of form and not a matter of content. Many things can be done in this mock adversary form, some of them quite attentive to the children's school work.

For example, for these children, explanations and corrections often take the form of mock adversary exchanges. The children keep track of what each other are doing and what is on each other's papers. This rather constant monitoring is made much easier by the fact that the children's desks are pushed together into clusters so that the desks form several big tables scattered around the room, and by the fact that the teachers usually allow the children to work together when carrying out an assignment.

This monitoring is also made easier by the fact that there is often a verbal component to the children's attention to a task. That is, when the children read, write, or do other physical tasks, they often accompany their work with spoken words. This verbal accompaniment can be a quite explicit description of what the child is doing, as the following excerpt illustrates.

EXCERPT 31

At one of the reading tables the assignment was to write down the answers to some questions that the teacher had written on the board. The teacher had written beside each question the page number on which the answer would be found. Doreatha turned around in her chair so that she was facing away from everyone else at the table. Looking down at her paper, she gave herself complete instructions for doing the exercise. She concluded with, "I'm gonna look for the answer on that page, and if it ain't there, I'm just gonna write, 'Can't find.'"

Usually the verbal accompaniment is less formal, however, as in the following excerpt.

EXCERPT 32

Raymond is copying an assignment from the board. When he comes to the date, October 30, 1980, he sings "Oh, Oh, Uh, hunh, hunh," speaks the letters softly "O-C-T-O-B-E-R" and then says "the thirtieth time of 1980." About thirty seconds later he comes to the word "journal," and he speaks out the letters, "J-O-U-R-N-A-L."[2]

There is also a great deal of announcing one's own progress and lack of progress as the children work together on their assignments, as the following excerpt illustrates.

EXCERPT 33

The children copied from the board yesterday five questions that they are now supposed to be answering. The answers are found in a story they have just finished.

Theresa: Wait a minute, wait a minute. I'm still on number two.
Jeff: Now here you go, number three. (Reads from his book.) It says "She let him have no rest (hesitates)
Theresa: Until
Jeff: -until he became quite worn out." So, you start from right there. Where's "she" at? Right there. (he points to the word in his book.) You start from right there.
Lonnie: I don't got number four from yesterday.
Theresa: (Softly) I'm tellin' you.
(five second pause)
Theresa: I ain't even started on my book yet.
(fifteen second pause)
Theresa: (Sings softly) I'm comin' out.
(sixteen second pause)
Theresa: Now I'm on number, questions yesterday.

---

[2] See Donald Graves (1979) for a discussion of a group of white first graders' use of speech to accompany writing. He uses lapel microphones hooked up to a video system that records exactly where the symbol is placed on the paper in relation to the sound. He suggests that speaking keeps these first graders in touch with the abstract process of writing.

I don't know number one, number two, so I'm gonna-
Jeff: Skip it!
Theresa: I am going to my book.
(three second pause)
Theresa: How you do it ( ). How you do this?
Jeff: Hey, Cindy, how you do that, that book?

Thus, the children keep track of each other's work by looking on each other's papers, but also by listening.

The children's monitoring of each other's work often has a competitive flavor, for example, as they keep track of how many problems each person has completed, or how many problems each has gotten right. The monitoring also helps the children get their work done. They watch what each other are doing and they sometimes volunteer corrections or explanations when they see that someone is doing something wrong.

These corrections or explanations are often done in a mock adversary manner, or they stir up a mock adversary response as the other child vigorously denies that he is doing anything wrong. As excerpt 34 below illustrates, at the same time that a child is heatedly denying that his answer is wrong, he may be checking it in his book, and quietly erasing his incorrect answer:

EXCERPT 34

The children are answering questions from their reading books. Donald looks over at Sim's paper and says loudly:

Donald: That's wrong.
Sim: (Immediately and heatedly) No, it ain't.
Donald: Yes, it is.
Sim: (Defensively) I know how to do my work. (But at the same time, he rereads the questions in his book and erases what he has written.)

The children comment not only on the content of each other's work but also on the way in which the work is done. In the excerpt 35 below, for example, a child is accused of doing her work sloppily:

EXCERPT 35

The children are working in reading groups, carrying out a workbook exercise. The teacher is working at her desk. Jeff looks across the table at Wanda's paper:

Jeff: This is sloppy, look at that.

Wanda: So what are you worried about it for?

Jeff: Wanda do some sloppy stuff, I swear. . . .

Wanda: So, at least I know it.

Theresa: (Loudly, stridently) At least she get it done.

Jeff: Yeah, she let people ( ).

Wanda: At least I get my work done.

Jeff: I don't care. At least I don't piss on myself.

Wanda: So, I don't care.

Jeff: You pee yesterday

Wanda: You did too.

Jeff: I did not. You know you pee yesterday.

Theresa: (To Wanda, referring to the workbook assignment) How you do it?

Wanda: I ain't the teacher. (But then Wanda reaches for Theresa's workbook and starts explaining the page to her.)

In the excerpt below, a child is accused of working on her homework at the wrong time.

EXCERPT 36

Mrs. Barnes finished calling out the answers to a reading workbook exercise, and told the children to open their social studies books to the new social studies lesson. For the last ten minutes or so Paula had been covertly doing her math homework at the same time that she was checking her reading workbook. Daniel, who sits across from Paula, looked at the math book hidden in her lap:

Daniel: (Accusingly) You're doin' your homework, Girl.

Paula: (Loudly) She said I could do it. Now mind your business.

Daniel: Who?

Paula: ( )

Mrs. Barnes: Page seventy-four it is. Now let's go.

Paula: Seventy-

Daniel: I'll ask her.

Paula: (Loudly, voice rising) Tell her if you want to. I can do my stuff if I want to. You ain't my mother *or* my father.

Daniel: I'm onna punch you in the face.

Mrs. Barnes: Page seventy-four. Paula, you have all *night* at home to complete that, my dear.

Paula: OK. (But she keeps on working.)

Daniel: I'm onna kick you right up your ass ( ).

Long silence. Paula keeps working on her math homework.

In the following excerpt a child is told not to write in the margins of her paper:

EXCERPT 37

Mrs. Barnes was giving directions for writing sentences for homework. Tamika looked over at Beatrice's paper where Beatrice had started writing sentences. Tamika told Beatrice: "She said don't write out in the margin." Beatrice loudly and immediately denied it: "I'm not writing out in the margin." Tamika insisted: "She said don't write out in it." The girls got louder and louder, and Beatrice changed her defense to "I can write out in the margin if I want to." Mrs. Barnes said, "May I have your attention please. May I have your attention please," and she repeated the instructions for the sentences.

These exchanges are sometimes interrupted by the teacher calling for attention, as the above excerpt illustrates, even though the children's concern with correct answers and with the manner in which their work is done could be considered quite attentive to the instructional task at hand. However, from a distance, what teachers have to go on is not the content of the children's talk, but what she can see and hear from across the room. At a distance all of these mock adversary exchanges sound very much alike, and it is at a distance that teachers must usually make their decisions about what to publicly notice as inattention.

Thus, this mock adversary style is a matter of form, not content. Not only do the children use the mock adversarial form for explanations and corrections that are attentive to their school work, they also use the mock adversarial form in the very process of getting attention. It is common that when Mrs. Barnes stops and waits silently for attention, several children will fill the silence with commands to the other children to be quiet. In the following excerpt, the commands erupt into an adversarial exchange:

EXCERPT 38

Mrs. Barnes is teaching a lesson on nutrition. The class gets noisy and she stops in the middle of a sentence to wait for them to get quiet:

Teacher: Now we had iron, and we said vitamins, at least
Mattie said vitamins, and it says specifically
(she stops abruptly and looks at the kids).
Girl: (Calls out to class) Shut up ya'll.
Boy: (Shouts) Be quiet.
Boy: (Shouts) Randall!
Randall: I'm shutting up. (Very loudly)
Boy: No you ain't. (Heatedly)
Teacher: Mattie, what vitamins does it say?
Mattie: B
Teacher: OK, this is the B vitamins.

In summary, then, this section has looked at a pattern of interaction that the teachers consider inattentive, inappropriate and disruptive and that they spend a lot of time trying to manage. We have also seen that this is a pattern of interaction that can sometimes create a situation in which the teacher thinks a child is not paying attention when in fact he is. The next section is a brief look at the community context of this pattern of interaction.

IV. COMMUNITY

This section considers the neighborhood where the children live, and the pattern of mock adversary challenges and responses in two community settings, and then compares the mock adversary exchanges to a similar pattern of exchanges between the children and adults in the community.

(A) The Neighborhood

The children in these two classrooms live within an area approximately four by four blocks square, the school being in one corner The area is mostly residential but is pierced near three of the boundaries by business arteries. (See illustration 2.) While the children stay mainly within the area to play with their friends, the neighborhood within which they and their parents shop and do their other business bulges out at the business arteries. Many of the families attend churches that are some distance outside the area.

The area within the school boundaries is not part of a named neighborhood, as, for example, are the neighborhoods to the immediate north and west. The neighborhood is perceived as an entity largely because of what it is not, that is, it is the area left out of the named neighborhoods that surround it on two sides.

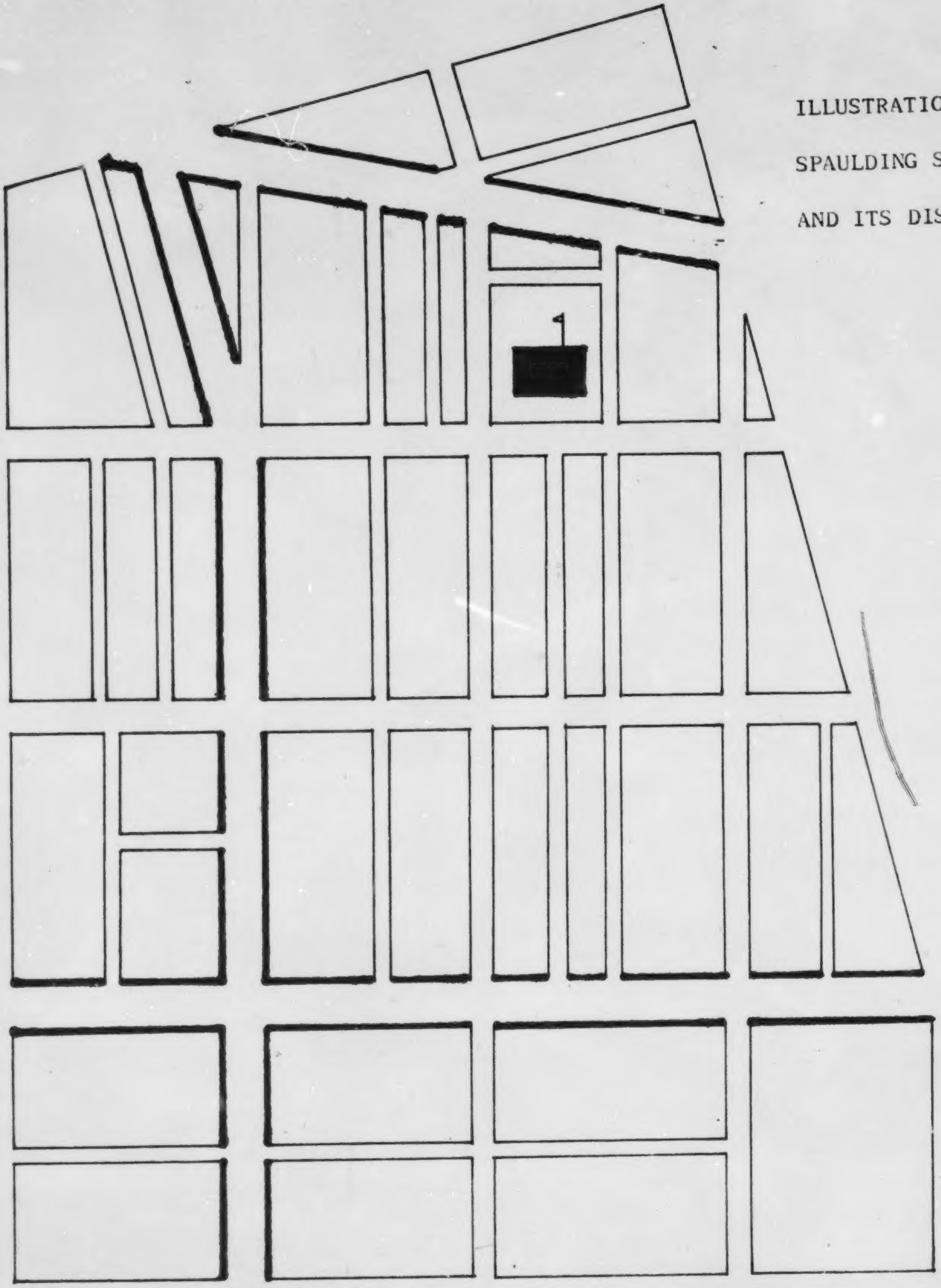
The difference between residents' perceptions of the boundaries of the neighborhood and more official perceptions was pointed up at a meeting of a community group. A speaker from the Office of Housing and Community Development was telling the group how to apply for a grant. A woman from the audience stood up and told the speaker that this area has been passed over by both the city and the federal governments. She ended with, "We haven't received any federal money." The speaker said, "What about Melville?" (the neighborhood to the immediate west). The woman said, "We aren't Melville." The speaker replied, "But you're close."

This is a low income neighborhood. According to Philadelphia School District figures, in 1979, 65% of the children in the Spaulding area came from families who earned less than the federal poverty level of $5,700 for a family of four.

ILLUSTRATION 2

SPAULDING SCHOOL

AND ITS DISTRICT



The houses are mostly narrow three-story row houses. There are well-kept blocks with porch furniture and planter boxes and with block associations that sponsor clean up days and block parties. There are also more run-down blocks whose houses have broken porch supports and trash on the sidewalk.

The neighborhood is stable or unstable, depending upon whom you talk to and where you look. The school has been there since 1905, and there are children at the school whose parents and grandparents also went to the school. This is a well-known fact in the community and was told to me proudly by a number of parents, children and teachers.

Besides these second and third generation families, there are many families who own their homes and have been in the neighborhood for years. As one mother told me, "I like where I live. The block is old neighbors. And besides I can't afford to move." There is a large proportion of older people in the neighborhood, many of whom own their homes.

Most families who move into the nieghborhood stay there a while. About three-fourths of the children who start kindergarten at Spaulding live there long enough to finish sixth grade.

Three of the teachers at Spaulding grew up in the neighborhood and two of them live there now. One of these teachers attended Spaulding herself, as did her children, one of whom has moved back into the neighborhood. The principal grew up in the adjacent neighborhood of Melville.

There are other institutions besides the school that have been there a long time. There are a few small businesses that have been there more than twenty years, including the small grocery a block from the school where the children buy candy and sodas at lunch and after school. There is an Episcopal church that has been there since the 1800's, a sixty-year-old Presbyterian church, and eight or nine churches that have been there ten years or more.

On the other hand, people also talk about how the neighborhood is changing. Several mothers told me that the streets are not as safe as they used to be. A mother told me that more and more houses are being cut up into apartments. The principal told me that more children are coming from single parent homes than used to and that more children have fathers who are unemployed than used to. The school counsellor gave me an interesting index of stability. She said that there were fewer foster children in the school than there used to be, a sign that fewer families were being judged as acceptable for foster children to be placed in them.

The Philadelphia School District reports that in 1974, 45% of the children at Spaulding came from families with incomes below the federal poverty level and that in 1979, 65% of the children came from such families.

The area has about ten block associations, a businessmen's association, a six-year-old community group that meets monthly and owns its own building, about fifteen churches and local committeemen who are part of the system of ward politics. None of these, except one or two of the churches, have many ties with the school, as indicated by their failure to come to the aid of the school when the School Board threatened to close it in the spring of the year in which I did my research.

Besides relationships with individual parents, the main ties between the school and the neighborhood are through the teachers' aides, almost all of whom live in the neighborhood and have children at the school. The principal has a policy, in fact, of rewarding mothers who consistently volunteer to help in the classroom (mothers who go on field trips with the class, for instance) by offering them paying jobs as playground or as classroom aides. These teachers' aides are the core of the Home-School Association, the parents' group that raises money for the sixth grade graduation trip, for other school activities and for special supplies such as sets of dictionaries. The five or six mothers who are active in this group are the ones who rallied behind the school when the Board threatened to close it, circulating petitions, writing a letter to the Board and organizing parents' meetings and marches.

The response from the community was disappointing to them and to the teachers. About thirty people showed up for the first march and twenty people for the second march. A planned third march was cancelled because of rain.

A couple of parents volunteered to testify at the School Board hearings, but got too nervous at the last minute and didn't show up, leaving the president of the Home-School Association, a past president of the Home-School Association who is active in ward politics and is employed by a U. S. Congressman, two children, a public librarian, and me to testify. (Teachers and staff were not allowed to testify, since they are school employees.)

All of the parents I talked to said they wanted the school to stay open. They were concerned about the inconvenience of sending the children to six different schools; angry at the idea of the sixth graders being bused to a school near the airport; angry at the waste of money involved in shutting down a school that had had $300,000 worth of new plaster and paint, a new furnace and other repairs in the last four years. They were concerned about their children going to schools where the parents wouldn't know the teachers and principal and where the teachers and principal wouldn't know the children as well as they do at Spaulding. As one mother told me, "There's a family feeling at this school that you won't find elsewhere. It's small and there's a close knit feeling. There's a one-to-one basis with the children." They were concerned that the building would be abandoned and would attract crime and lower the property value of their homes.

But they also talked about feeling powerless. (As one father told me, "There's no clout in District One. The North and the South have all the clout.") And they talked about having seen it all before. ("I'll believe it when I see it," one mother told me.) She was referring to the fact that almost every year for nine years the Board has talked about closing the school, but the school always stayed open. Some years there were parent protests, and some years the School Board's talking never reached the stage where that was necessary.

Again this year the School Board decided to close only two of the schools, leaving Spaulding open.

(B) Mock adversary exchanges

The mock adversary challenges and responses discussed in Section III are a common pattern of interaction outside the classroom. They are extremely common on the playground, street and other public settings. They are not just "street talk," however. This section is a brief look at two less public settings, church and Girl Scout meetings.

I attended two very different kinds of church events, a Baptist youth group meeting with Stacey and a Catholic church service and supper with Sammy, and in both cases, found children using mock adversary challenges and responses.

At the Baptist youth group, for example, twenty children from about ten to fourteen years old were sitting in a circle on folding chairs when Stacey and I arrived:

EXCERPT 39

The children were supposed to be memorizing the order of the books of the Bible. Two or three loud mock adversary exchanges broke out during the ten minutes or so that the children were supposed to be studying. A boy told a girl, for example, that she had on a "dumbbell dress." She told him to shut up, and he told her she had "dumbbell shoes" and "dumbbell socks" and a "dumbbell head." She told him to leave her alone because he was too stupid to know any of that. The group leader, a man in his late twenties, took no notice of any of the talking. He was flipping through his own Bible, writing down chapters and verses on a piece of paper.

Then the group leader stood up and began a game in which he would call out a Bible verse and the children were supposed to hunt for the verse in their Bibles. The first child to find it would stand and read the verse aloud. During the game a boy jostled a girl's arm, causing her to lose her place. She told him she would knock his head in and he said loudly that he would knock her tooth in. The group leader picked up the word "knock" from the children's talk and worked it into his own introduction to the next Bible verse. He said "Knock on the door of heaven. Find the key to the door in..." Here he paused and then finished dramatically, "MATTHEW 6:11." Both children stopped talking and began looking for the verse in their Bibles.

The children use this pattern of mock adversary challenge and response to correct each other, as in the following excerpt.

EXCERPT 40

When the game ended, the group leader open his book of lessons and began talking about what the children were supposed to have read during the week. One girl opened her book to the back, and the boy sitting beside her said, "Bubble head, that ain't the right page." She said, "You better tell your own self what page you're on." He said something else in a loud, agitated voice. She made one more reply and then turned to the front of the book to find the lesson.

I also went to a Catholic church supper and service with Sammy and his mother and sister. Sammy met a friend, Shoney, and the two of them sat together. During the church service itself the boys were very quiet and I didn't hear anything that sounded like a mock adversary exchange. But during the supper and the film that preceded it, Sammy and his friend occasionally traded insults and mock threats. For supper and the film,about a hundred people were sitting at long tables in a large hall, the white priests and nuns and the mostly black congregation. At our table were Sammy and his friend, Sammy's mother and a fried of hers, two other women, and me. Sammy's mother made no public notice of any of the boys' insults and threats, except once during the film when Sammy told his friend to "shut his rat trap." The mother leaned over and told Sammy to "shut your own rat trap and listen."

Mock adversary exchanges were also common at the Girl Scout meetings that I attended with Kate and Lissa. These meetings are held each Saturday in the basement of the Presbyterian church near the school. The leader is a black woman in her late twenties whom the girls call Miss Angela. The following excerpt is from fieldnotes of a meeting where the girls were making red satin heart-shaped pillows for Valentine's Day presents for their mothers.

EXCERPT 41

Miss Angela was showing the girls how to cut around a heart-shaped pattern to get the shape for the pillows. About ten girls were sitting around a big table full of red cloth, pieces of ribbon and lace, rolls of toilet paper to stuff the pillows, scissors, needles, thread, etc. Darlene reached over to try to feel Lissa's pulse. Lissa grabbed her hand away and said, "You hairy paw." Darlene said, "You grimy paw." They traded insults until Darlene made a mistake tracing around the pattern and took it up to ask Miss Angela what to do.

A few minutes later Lissa told Andrea to move her "big floppy butt." Andrea said, "At least I've got a butt." Lissa said, "Move it then." Andrea reached over and drew a tiny picture of buttocks on the heart-shaped newspaper pattern that Lissa was using to make her pillow. Lissa said loudly, "Oooooh," and both girls started giggling.

As they worked on the pillows, the girls sometimes used the pattern of mock adversary challenges and responses to explain things to each other, as in the following excerpt.

EXCERPT 42

Darlene was watching Lissa sew lace around her pillow. Suddenly she said loudly "You can't even use your head. Look at that lace, girl." Lissa grabbed the pillow away and said, "Leave my pillow alone." Darlene said, "Why would I touch your beejack pillow." Then she said, "Use your head, girl. Look at that lace. You got to sew it this way if you want it to stay on." She took the pillow and the needle and thread and showed Lissa how to take stitches that went through the lace and both layers of the red satin cloth.

This brief look at church events and at Girl Scout meetings, then, finds the children using a pattern of mock adversary exchanges to correct each other and to explain things to each other, as we have seen the children do in the classroom. In the classroom, as we have seen, explanations in such form are sometimes called down by the teacher as inattentive.

(C) Teasing

These mock adversary exchanges are something that go on between children. The same theme, verbally standing up for your self under pressure, also gets played out in a pattern of interaction between children and adults in the community. The differences and similarities help round out a picture of mock adversary exchanges.

Parents and other adults in the community tease children. The following discussion is based on observations of parents, playground aides and a Girl Scout leader teasing children. The playground aides at Spaulding are mothers who have children at the school. There are two kinds of aides, playground aides whose job is to keep order before school and at lunchtime, and classroom aides whose job is to assist the teachers during certain periods of the day. I saw playground aides tease children, but not classroom aides, in the classroom, nor did I ever see the two teachers tease children.

When the adults tease children, it often takes the form of an accusation, a mock threat, or a statement that embarrasses the child, and the children are allowed and sometimes encouraged to defend themselves verbally, as the following four excerpts illustrate. For example, in excerpt 43 the father embarrasses his son Sammy by claiming that the son had told him that I was the son's girlfriend. Sammy's response is to deny it.

EXCERPT 43

Today I went to Sammy's house for the first time to meet his mother and father and eighth grade sister. The five of us sat in the living room and talked. In the course of getting acquainted and exchanging information with me about age, occupation, etc., the four family members teased each other a lot. For example, the father (who is thirty-seven) told me he was twenty-one. His wife asked him, "Did you have Sammy when you were ten?" The father asked Sammy how old he was, and when Sammy said "Eleven," the father said to the mother, "Oooh, you're gettin' old." The father said he felt young: "I feel nineteen." The mother told him, "Don't you go acting nineteen."

The mother and father kept up a running exchange of playful accusations throughout the visit. For example, the father said that the mother was never home during the day. The mother pressed her lips into an expression of exaggerated indignation, and told me it was his relatives she was always out taking care of. The father mentioned the mother's weight, and the mother responded with something about the father's pot belly. This time the father, who is quite lean, put on an expression of exaggerated disbelief.

The parents also teased the children. For example, the mother told me that Sammy had thought it was last Monday instead of this Monday that I was supposed to come and meet the family. She said that he had come home from school and told his mother to "get ready because Linda's coming." Sammy's dad said that he "told us you were pretty," and he "told us you were his girlfriend." Sammy broke in, "I did not," and his father laughed.

In the following excerpt, when Sammy's father claims that Sammy cheats at solitaire, Sammy responds with a series of competitive statements. First he says he beat his dad at bowling. And when the father claims that it was beginner's luck," Sammy says that he also beat his dad at pool.

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EXCERPT 45

The children from Mrs. Lindley's class filed onto the bus for a fieldtrip to Playhouse in the Park, a theater in Fairmount Park. Mrs. Stanley, mother of one of the boys in the class, got on the bus last, eating a soft pretzel. As she made her way down the aisle to her seat, she said to the bus full of children, who were sitting quietly, "That's how I want to hear it the rest of the trip. That's why I brought this -- a black jack," and she waved her small black purse in the air. The children laughed. Then she said to her son, who was sitting at the back of the bus, "Ronnie, you're already in the doghouse, so you better be cool, or I'll hit you with this." Ronnie replied, "I'm always cool," and the children on the bus laughed again.

In the next excerpt, a teacher's aide threatens to visit a child's father at home to tell him about his son's behavior, and the boy insists that he's doing nothing wrong.

EXCERPT 46

Mrs. Cameron, a playground aide, came into the classroom to watch over the children while they ate their sack lunches. She sat on an empty desk at the back of the room, eating her sandwich. Three boys came over to her and started horsing around. One of the boys fell back against the bulletin board, raised his arms out at his side, rolled his eyes back into his head and said to the aide, "I'm blind, I'm blind." The aide shot back immediately, "I'm goin' to see if your father's blind when I go to see him tonight." She laughed, and the boy said, "I ain't doin' nothin' wrong," and then he laughed, and one of the other boys bumped up against him to knock him back against the bulletin board. Then, I suppose to explain to me her statement, the aide told me that she was never able to make the boy behave, so she would have to go see his father about it.

It is the adults who set the joking, mock aggressive tone of these interactions, using some of the same verbal devices that the children use in their mock adversary exchanges with each other, as discussed in Section III. For example, the adults make mock threats and clever, patently false statements, as in excerpt 45 above where Mrs. Stanley tells her son and a busload of his classmates that she will hit them if they don't stay quiet. She waves her purse in the air, claiming that it is a blackjack. The adults also bring up topics that embarrass the children, as in excerpt 43 above, where Sammy's father embarrasses his son by telling me that Sammy had told him I was Sammy's girlfriend.

The child's role in these interactions is basically defensive, not offensive. He defends himself against the adult's teasing, for example, as in excerpt 43, by denying what the adult says, or in excerpt 46, by denying that what the adult says applies to him. The child has a certain amount of leeway in teasing back. A child can, for example, as excerpt 44 illustrates, counter his father's accusation that he cheats at solitaire with a series of claims about beating his father at other games. However, as the below suggests he can't tell his father to "shut up:"

EXCERPT 47

Sammy, his mother and father and sister and I were sitting in their living room talking. The mother and father had just finished a series of playful accusations about each other. (See Excerpt 8). The father started talking to me about his son, and told me that the son would rather chase girls than study. The son said to his father, "Shup up." The father looked at him sharply and said, "What did you say?" The son said quickly, "I just said to sit up." The father laughed and moved on to another topic.

The father doesn't allow the boy to tell him to shut up; however, he laughs appreciatively at his son's quick thinking in talking his way out of trouble.

The paralinguistic features of the children's side of these interactions are likewise defensive, not offensive. There is a high pitched, "who me?," unjustly accused tone to them rather than the strident, strutting tones of the children's mock adversary exchanges with each other.

The teasing is always done in front of an audience, for example, other family members or friends of the child (sometimes a whole busload of the child's friends, as in excerpt 45). In the case of teasing a child by embarrassing him, in fact, the embarrassing statement is made about the child to a third party in the presence of the child, as excerpts 43 and 44 illustrate. It is the child, however, not the third party, who speaks next, and he jumps in to defend himself. This is similar to the joking insults of the children's mock adversary exhanges with each other, which are often made about a child in his presence rather than being addressed to the child. And it is the insulted child whose turn it is to speak next and defend himself.

Usually it is the adult who initiates teasing interactions between and adult and a child, and as discussed above, the adult is likely to begin the interaction with a mock threat, an accusation or a statement that embarrasses the child. Sometimes a child initiates a teasing interaction with an adult. However, the child does not turn the tables and threaten, accuse or embarrass the adult. Instead he is likely to begin the interaction with a humorous and patently false statement or with a request that he knows is out of the question. For example, in the excerpt below, Allen asks the teachers' aide for money, and when she refuses, he claims to be a poor widow who needs the money. In the same excerpt, eleven year old Theresa tells the teachers' aide she's been at the school for twenty-four years, and the aide teases her back: "I knew you was an old woman."

EXCERPT 48

When the lunch period ended, and the children started putting on their coats to go outside, another of the boys, Allen, said to the aide, "You got any money to give away?" She said no, and he squatted down on the floor, clasped his hands in front of his chest and said in a begging voice, "Please, please, please." He took a few steps in the squatted down position and said, "I'm a poor widow. Please give me some money." The aide laughed and said to him, "Oh, you go on." He stood up and he and the other boys left the room, laughing and hitting at each other.

In a few minutes the aide and I started walking downstairs with two of the girls. In response to something that one of the girls, Theresa, said, the aid said, "You been here as long as I have, and I been here four years." Theresa said, "I been here twenty-four years." The aide said, "I knew you was an old woman."

The similarities, then, between this teasing and the mock adversary exchanges are many. Both are played out in front of audiences. The discourse framework is the same: a pattern of challenge and response into which a number of genres, routines and speech acts can be fitted. The theme is the same: pressure of various kinds and standing up verbally to that pressure. The key or frame is the same: a joking mock adversary stance. This stance is communicated through a number of the same linguistic means: accusations, mock threats, embarrassing statements, clever patently false statements, for instance.

The differences are those of degree and intensity, not of kind. What I have called teasing is a gentler interaction than is the pattern of mock adversary exchanges. For example, the challenges are softened paralinguistically although they are quite similar in actual form. That is, when adults tease children they do not use the strident, loud, accusatory tone that the children often use with each other. The tone is more conversational and there are lots of cues that communicate that the interaction is meant to be playful, for example, the adult may put on a clearly exaggerated expression of dismay or outrage, and he may repeatedly cut his gaze back and forth between the child and the audience to let everyone know that this is not a private matter but is a playful performance.

The children's responses to an adult's teasing are much more restricted than are their responses to another child in a mock adversary exchange. The children are limited to a mostly defensive role both linguistically and paralinguistically, and when they do take an offensive role they must pull their punches. Because of these limitations, the teasing exchanges do not escalate as quickly or go as far as do the mock adversary exchanges. They are not the loud, strident exchanges that you find between children.

So far, then, we have been filling in parts of a four-part frame. (See chart 3) We have seen children initiate mock adversary exchanges with each other. We have seen adults initiate teasing with children, adults initiate teasing with other adults, and children initiate a more restrained form of teasing with adults. Filling out the frame, it is also common to find in the community mock adversary exchanges between adults, particularly between young men and between young men and women. And, as we have seen in Part III, the children's mock adversary exchanges with each other include a range of challenges and responses of various intensities and degress, so that some of them begin to shade into what I have here called teasing.

CHART 3

		INTERLOCUTOR	
		ADULT	CHILD
INITIATOR	ADULT	TEASING MOCK ADVERSARY EXCHANGES	TEASING
	CHILD	TEASING	TEASING MOCK ADVERSARY EXCHANGES

The mock adversary exchanges that the children bring from the community into the classroom, then, are part of a more inclusive community pattern of challenge and response. Across generations and at other times when the participants want to soften the interaction and pull their punches, you find teasing. Between peers at times when it is not as necessary to pull punches, you find mock adversary exchanges. And it should be remembered that the mock adversary exchanges are themselves a form of pulled punches; they are mock adversary, mock aggressive challenges and responses that use a number of the same linguistic and paralinguistic devices found in real arguments. Thus, mock adversary exchanges have a bearing on communicative styles and skills that the children need now as well as later in life. They are part of a complicated system of knowing when to be playfully aggressive and when to pull your punches that the children must learn if they are to become competent individuals within their community.

(D) Oral, Collaborative Dimensions of Attention to Reading and Writing in the Community

The pattern we have seen at school and in the community, that is, the children monitoring each other's work and using a mock adversary style to explain things to each other, has oral and collaborative aspects that are part of a more general pattern of attention in the community. For the children, attention to a task often has oral and collaborative dimensions, and the two are related, since the oral aspect is frequently the mechanism that allows the collaboration to occur. This section looks briefly at oral and collaborative aspects of reading and writing in the community.

When the children read to amuse themselves it is often done orally and with other children, as, for example, in the following excerpt.

EXCERPT

I went into a drugstore with Lissa, Stacey and Wanda. While I was paying for something at the counter, one of the girls drifted over to the rack of greeting cards. She picked up a Father's Day card and brought it back to the other two girls. Holding it so that they could see it too, she started reading it aloud, and the other two girls began reading aloud along with her.

There is often a gaming, competitive aspect to the children's reading aloud with each other. In the following excerpt, for example, a boy invents a game as he and his sister are sitting with their mother in the waiting room of a health clinic.

EXCERPT

Toby picked up a copy of Ebony magazine and started paging through it. He came to a page with about twenty-five individual portraits of the members of a sports team with each person's name printed below his picture. Toby said to his sister, "You read all their first names in twenty seconds." He counted to twenty while she read the names aloud.

Reading together can have aspects of a race, as in the following excerpt.

EXCERPT

Toby and his friend Sammy were in a drugstore waiting for me to get a prescription filled. They walked over to the magazine rack, and Toby picked up a joke book. He started reading jokes to Sammy. Sammy looked over Toby's shoulder and began reading along with him. The boys read three jokes very fast, each boy trying to come to the end of the joke before the other boy.

When the children read, they often turn the text into something that belongs to them, by embellishing, elaborating, paraphrasing, acting it out, or using special voices. For example, when I took a group of children to a movie, they amused themselves as we walked around downtown by reading signs aloud to each other. They sometimes changed the wording of the signs, playing with the sounds of the words or adding their own comments. For instance, when we passed Bookbinders restaurant with its large sign, "Bookbinders," Saundra read aloud, "Bookbinders," and then added, "binders, binders, binders, binders, binders." At Penn's Landing near the Delaware River we came to a sign that said, "NO SWIMMING. CURRENTS." Tammy looked at the sign and said, "NO SWIMMING. DANG. CURRENTS. OH, YES, LORD," pronoucing all four phrases with the tone and cadence normally associated with reading.

The children can be quite explicit about turning written texts into something that belongs to them. In the following excerpt, for example, the children take turns reading a Wonder Woman comic book to each other, changing the names and places to fit their own situation.

EXCERPT

Lissa and Tamika were waiting for the Girl Scout meeting to begin. They found a Wonder Woman comic book and started reading aloud to each other, each one taking a part to read. When they came to proper names of enemies of Wonder Woman they would substitute the names of girls in their class. They found this very funny, laughing and flopping their arms each time they did it.

Reading that is done in response to adult direction also often has oral and collaborative aspects. For example, in the following excerpt, the Girl Scout leader tells the girls to study the Girl Scout laws, and a group of girls take their Girl Scout handbooks off into a corner and organize themselves to take turns reading the laws aloud.

EXCERPT

At the beginning of the meeting, Miss Carolyn, the Girl Scout leader, told the girls to "study the Girl Scout laws for ten minutes." Four of the girls took out their handbooks and went over into a corner of the room, where they began taking turns reading the laws aloud. They read the list of laws three or four times.

Because of the telephone, reading can be done collaboratively even when the children are in separate places. For example, Mrs. Barnes told me about three girls who telephoned each other (two were at one house on different extensions) to read aloud a story that they were going to be tested on in school the next day.

Collaborative "reading" can be accomplished even if one of the collaborators is too young to read. In one family, for example, the sixth grade daughter is often put in charge of the pre-school daughter and the first grade daughter. Faced with the job of keeping them amused, she often reads to them. In the following excerpt, she makes the first grader participate, even though she can't read the words, by making her repeat certain lines after her.

EXCERPT

Mrs. Taylor went to see her siter, leaving Lissa in charge of Tanya and Tamika. Lissa, Tanya and I played Monopoly for about an hour, and then Tamika brought a book over to Lissa and whispered something in her ear. Lissa sat down with Tamika and read the book to her. There was a little girl in the story, and each time Lissa came to something the little girl said she made Tamika repeat it after her.

There are often oral and collaborative aspects, then, to the children's attention to reading in the community. The collaborative dimension depends upon the oral one. That is, collaboration is accomplished partly through oral means. The oral dimension, however, appears even when a child is alone, although it is less common than when children are together. In the following excerpt, for example, Sammy is alone in his living room reading a comic book.

EXCERPT

I was sitting on the front porch with Sammy's mother and his sister. Sammy was alone in the living room reading a Spider Man comic book. Through the screen door I could hear him talking. He was saying thing like, "Take that, you Spider Man. I'll get your spider suit," and "Go Big Onk, you're a spider-dider too," as he turned the pages.

In the following excerpt, Lissa is alone in the kitchen.

EXCERPT

From the top of the stairs I could see Lissa sitting at the kitchen table drinking a glass of Hawaiian Punch. She reached over and picked up a bill from a pile of papers on the table, and sang the words written across the top of the bill, "Philadelphia Electric Company." She put the bill down, and then looked at the back of a cereal box and sang, "Raisin bran, raisin bran."

There are also verbal and collaborative aspects to the children's attention to what they write, (as Sue Fiering's paper demonstrates in depth). For example, composing is sometimes done collaboratively. In the following excerpt, two girls are writing letters. Lissa reads to Tamika the lines she has already written. Then she thinks of a new idea, which she tells Tamika before she writes it down. Tamika decides to use the same idea, and writes it in her own letter.

EXCERPT

The Girl Scout troop was writing letters to a group of women who live in a rest home. Lissa wrote a few sentences, and then read them to Tamika, who was sitting next to her. She said to Tamika, "I think I'll ask her how many grandchildren she has," and then she wrote a sentence asking the woman how many grandchildren she has. Tamika said, "I'll ask this lady how many granchildren *she* has," and then she wrote that sentence into her letter.

The girls in the Girl Scout troop spend a lot of time writing on a blackboard in the basement of the church where the scout troop meets. They write on the board before and after meetings and sometimes during meetings when there is nothing else they are supposed to be doing. They write in twos, threes and fours and occasionally alone. This writing is the occasion of a lot of talking and laughing and sometimes gets quite loud. The girls write insults (for example, "You pig face"), boasts ("I am the greatest"), and directives ("Shut up and leave me alone"). They play variations of tic-tac-toe and they copy sentences out of their Girl Scout handbooks. The girls sometimes play with the physical process of writing, adding curls and flourishes or forming the letters with big swoops of their arms.

Even in such an unfamiliar setting as a college archeology laboratory girls play with the blackboards, as the following excerpt illustrates.

EXCERPT

I took a group of girls to the University of Pennsylvania to show them where I go to school. We walked through the anthropology department, and in an archeology lab the girls wandered over to a blackboard and started writing each other's names. Pammy wrote "is the greatest" beside her own name, and the other girls began writing flattering adjectives beside their names, each trying to top the other.

Not all the reading and writing that the children do in the community is done in this oral, collaborative way. When the children are alone, for example, there is far less oral reading and writing. And when children are together, not each instance of reading or writing is done orally or collaboratively. There are times when adults enforce quiet from children, such as, for instance, when adult business takes precedence over children's business, as at community meetings when someone is giving a speech, or at choir rehearsal when the adults are practicing. And there are times when the children themselves choose to read or write silently and alone, especially if the task is short and simple. The commonness of this oral, collaborative attention to reading and writing is striking, however, and must be part of any description of attention behavior in the community.

In summary, then, in trying to find out what counts as attention in these two classrooms, we have had to look at a number of things. We have looked at how teachers infer attention, and have seen that what teachers leave out when they say that they can infer attention or inattention from a child's work is the intervening variable of the individual child. That is, the teacher brings to her interpretation of a child's work all her prior knowledge of the child. What the teacher means when she says she infers attention from a child's work is that she infers attention or inattention from a particular child's work.

We have seen that what counts as attention depends upon the activity, the teacher, the child. We have compared group attention to individual attention. We have seen that teachers are both consciously and unconsciously selective in what they notice as inattention. Attention, then, is an ever-changing, highly selective phenomenon, with the teacher as a spotlight, focusing on what she feels is necessary for both teaching and learning. The teacher is as strict in her idea of appropriate levels of attention and as selective in what she notices as she feels she needs to be to accomplish her job -- teaching, which includes a job for the children, learning.

The teachers discuss attention with a finely drawn awareness of detail and context, an awareness that, again, serves their purpose of making it easier for themselves to teach.

As we have also seen, the accuracy of the teachers' perceptions can also be in the service of their job of managing the classroom. We have examined a pattern of mock adversary challenges and responses that the children bring from the community into the classroom, a pattern that the teachers believe to be inattentive, disruptive and a drain on class time. In regard to this behavior that the teachers find to be a problem for themselves in the management of the classroom, the teachers' perceptions of the children are selective and they sometimes blame a child for inattention when he is in fact attentive. We have looked briefly at the community context of this pattern of interaction and in more detail at its use in the classroom, and have seen that the pattern of mock adversary challenges and responses is a way of talking that can be used to do a number of things, including, for example, explanations and corrections that are attentive to the school task at hand.

It is important to remember that these are by and large not silent classrooms. A good deal of talking is allowed, insofar as it does not interfere with the official task at hand. In this respect the classrooms are continuous with the everyday life of the children outside of school, where talking is a frequent concomitant of paying attention to things, including activities analogous to activities in school, such as reading. The contrast between classroom and community life for the children is not one between silence and talk, but one of degree and control of talking. To a considerable extent the interest of the children in verbal interaction is allowed a place in the classroom itself. And children find both at home and at school agreement that attention is required for learning. One notable inconsistency between the expectations of the classroom and the verbal style of the children is in the subtle sphere of a pervasive pattern of interaction whose overt form may mask the attention to instruction that is actually being paid.

The teachers' considerable awareness of behavior, both their own and the children's, and of their inferences from behavior, again both by themselves from the children's behavior, and by the children from their own, demonstrates the importance of "attention" to them. It also suggests an important point about the relation of ethnography to everyday life. On the one hand, ethnography is a necessary instrument for understanding everyday life, because people are largely unaware of the often complex patterning of what they do. The complex patterning of language is the central example in twentieth century thought, as the work of Boas, Sapir, Levi-Strauss and other shows. People have mastery of a complex grammar that they cannot and need not themselves analyze. On the other hand, certain roles and tasks may make people de facto ethnographers of their own situations. The importance which teachers attach to attention as a basis for learning makes them acute observers of signs of attention in other and themselves.

To speak, then, of the unconscious patterning of behavior is partly to articulate one essential truth, and partly to obscure another. An adequate view of a society would not be of a set of people largely unconscious of the patterns underlying behavior, in accordance with their roles and practical tasks. With regard to the unconscious patterning of behavior, a community is, to use a phrase of A. F. C. Wallce an "organization of diversity." One way to characterize a community would be as a set of partial ethnographic perspectives on the part of its members.

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ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING
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TEACHING WRITING: ONE TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE

Claire Woods-Elliott

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I — I. Mode of Inquiry

II. Development of Relationships with Schools

III. School Leaders as Participants in Research

IV. Individual Reports

- A. Harriet Tubman School: Community Perspectives (Davis)

VOLUME II

- B. Shortridge School and Community: Portrait of the Principal (Anderson)
- C. Shortridge School and Community: Teacher-Parent Relationships (Watkins)
- D. Shortridge School and Community: Attitudes and Admission to Literacy (Gilmore)
- E. Shortridge School and Community: Boy's Verbal Abilities (Lussier)
- F. Spaulding School: Attention and Styles of Interaction (May)

VOLUME III

- G. Commodore School: Teaching Writing: One Teacher's Experience (Woods-Elliot)
- H. Commodore School: Unofficial Writing (Fiering)

V. General Findings (Smith)

VI. Ethnographic Monitoring: A Way to Understanding By Those Who Are Making Schooling Work

PAGE

PART ONE. TEACHING WRITING

I. Introduction: Theoretical Perspective 1

II. The Study 5

The Site 5

Data Collection and the Role of the Researcher 6

III. Occasions for Writing in the Classroom 7

(1) Routine Writing 7

(2) Writing time writing 12

(3) Other writing by children in the classroom 15

IV. Writing: Personal, Public, Collaborative 17

V. The Writing Workshop 20

VI. Conclusion 28

PART TWO. TEACHER AND RESEARCHER: EVOLUTION OF A WORKING RELATIONSHIP

I. Introduction 30

II. Issues 32

(1) Negotiating the researcher's role: access 32

(2) Trust and confidentiality 36

(3) Negotiating the researcher's role: towards collaboration 38

(4) Participation: three roles 40

(5) One incident for change 42

(6) "Stranger and friend" 44

III. Conclusion 45

PART ONE. TEACHING WRITING

I. INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This study attempts to describe how one teacher teaches writing. Perhaps that is better rephrased, how one teacher makes writing a part of her students' lives. It is a process whereby one sixth grade teacher uses writing in the course of daily classroom routine, that is, as part of the learning-centered routines in which social studies, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and other subjects are a focus, but also focuses on writing per se, making the act of writing the focus of the class activity. This is the process whereby she encourages and motivates students to express themselves in writing; to become confident writers unafraid to put pen to paper; to not only want to write but also to *want* to polish their writing for themselves and for another reader.

It is the time when she concentrates on the students and their ability to put thoughts on paper; on their ability to articulate their ideas and feelings with the written symbol system. It is the time in which she focuses her teaching activities and her response to them on their growth as writers.

Even the phrase "*makes* writing a part of the students' lives" is somewhat inaccurate, for writing is already part of students' lives - it is all around them. They respond to it as it functions in their daily lives and they use it for specific communicative purposes. One might assume that this is so, but little has been done to demonstrate it in educational research. In a pioneering study Shirley Heath has shown, how, in the rural community in which she studied and worked for five years, children are surrounded by "literacy events," that is, occasions where reading and writing are a functional part of everyday activities. She noted that they "learned some control of environmental print without being taught" because they needed to do so. They learned to respond to written word in a relevant context.

Heath noted seven distinguishable uses of literacy in the community, based on observed uses of reading (Instrumental, Social-Interactional, News-related, Memory-supportive, Substitutes for oral messages, Provision of a Permanent record, Confirmation). Such reading tended to be highly contextualized and focused on information meaningful to a specific situation. None of the seven uses matches the types of literacy activity which characterize the school -

that is, reading and writing as critical, aesthetic, organizational and recreational. Heath suggests that "... the extent to which physiologically normal adults learn to read and write depends greatly on the life contexts, that is on the role literacy plays in their families, communities and jobs." (Heath 1980.) To the extent that the people in this community, including the young child, need to learn or gather information, they read. Heath's point is, first, that one reads to learn (rather than learns to read), and second, that the skills model which informs the teaching of early reading in schools has not taken into account the literacy skills which the child brings to the school situation from community experience. The "current state of literacy research" she emphasizes, "suggests expanding definitions, measures, methods and materials behind the literacy teaching to incorporate not only school-based skills, uses and functions of literacy, but also the counterparts and modifications of these in out-of-school contexts."

This perspective contributes to the perspective taken in the analysis of the data collected during this research. The perspective is ethnographic: a perspective which suggests that we can describe the writing events of the classroom, the participants in those events, the interaction between the participants, the framing of literacy and writing events in the classroom as a social activity. More than this, it suggests that writing events in the classroom must be viewed from the wider perspective of reading and writing events of the community to which the school belongs.

Basso (1974) has pointed to the importance of uncovering the "social patterning" of writing activity and also "the contributions it makes to the maintenance of social systems." He suggests (following Hymes) that it would be useful to discover the classes of communication acts - acts of writing or writing events which are accepted and used by a community. Such study would reveal the social and cultural factors which influence the use of writing. Papers by Szwed, research by Heath, and current research by Scribner and Jacobs (in the context of a dairy plant) have sought to relate functional literacy activities to social context, in terms of the interactions between the participants in the events. Basso suggests that "the activity of writing, like the activity of speaking, is a supremely social act." Research which attempts to observe and describe the writing activities and interaction of the participants in the classroom context must therefore consider learning to write and the teaching of writing, as with the teaching of reading and learning to read, as a process firmly couched in the social dynamic of the classroom.

A second stimulus to the perspective adopted in this study is that which had emerged from recent research in the composing processes of children. In a seminal study, Graves (1973) set out to "gain a profile of behavioral patterns associated with the writing process" of seven-year-old writers, first, by close observation of the children writing in the classroom and of writing episodes in which teacher and students were engaged and, second, by case studies of eight of the children, including (in addition to the process-related data) parent interviews and community and home context data related to the children's writing development. Graves established for his analysis the notion of the "writing episode." By this he meant that a writing episode or the process of writing at a particular time, is "more than the child's act of composing and writing down words." There are other variables which account for the way the child writes and what he/she writes at any one time. "The researcher must broadly reconnoiter territory before, during, and following the composing of the child," he suggests in order that he understand "even a single writing episode " One episode is a complex relationship between variables. The writing process itself, within the writing episode or writing event is comparably complex.

Research into the nature of the composing process has revealed this complexity and the dynamic interrelationships between personal, environmental and cognitive variables as they affect the writer's development (Graves, 1973, 1978-80; Emig 1969, Pianko 1979, Perl, 1978). Vygotsky has indicated the demands made on the writer in the process of writing:

> In written speech we are obliged to create the situation, to represent it to ourselves. This demands detachment from the actual situation....written language demands conscious work because its relationship to inner speech is different from that of oral speech...(1962).

The complexity of the process has been underestimated in all probability by teachers, researchers and educators. (Graves certainly thinks this is the case.) As Graves points out, "Writing as communication is frequently lost in a plethora of meaningless exercises, of copying from the chalkboard, filling the workbook blanks, recopying, recording assignments." His study raised a number of issues related to the impact of the classroom environment and teacher variables in the child's development as a writer, although he did not explore these in depth, for his emphasis was on the child's composing process. Central to the variables which he obtained was the question of the teacher's role in the complex activity and process of writing: What is a teacher's involvement in that process? How does she perceive her role? On what basis does she intervene in the process of the child's writing?

In a recent paper, Graves refocused some of the issues raised by his earlier research. The new focus is on the teacher. Writing research for the 80's should discover and detail the role of the teacher of writing:

> We have never even studied one teacher to know what are the ingredients involved in teaching writing. Where a case study was the gateway to understanding the writing process and the ingredients in it, the same approach is now needed for the teaching process. (unpublished draft ms. 1980)

If then we are to consider the phenomenon of writing instruction in the classroom, we cannot focus only on what the teacher does when she says that she is "teaching writing." We need to concentrate on some of the following issues and, in addition to asking the question, how do children write or compose?, ask:

How do the children perceive themselves as writers? Or how do they define themselves as readers and writers? (Heath's phrase)
How do they use writing in the classroom and outside the class and school context?
How does the teacher perceive herself as a writer and how does she perceive the children or students as writers?
How does this influence the writing events of the classroom?
How does she conceive of her task as a teacher of writing?
What are her priorities in teaching writing?

Are these priorities a reflection of her personal valuing of writing or her concept of literacy?

How does she frame writing events in the classroom?

How does she provide opportunities for writing in the classroom?

What uses does she make of writing in the learning environment?

How does she respond to the children in the process of their writing?

In the study reported here, the emphasis is on the classroom context for writing and on the teacher and children as participants in writing events which serve many functions. The importance of teacher-child interactions is vital to the way the child extends his or her ways of writing, in order to incorporate into his/her definition of self as a writer, not only those ways which are appropriate to the school situation and to social needs, but also those which contribute to his or her own symbolization of ideas, feelings and experience of the world, on paper.

This paper is a preliminary exploration of one teacher and twenty-eight children and their participation in the writing events of a sixth grade classroom. The limited time spent in data collection and observation prevents handling all the research issues suggested above and indeed all those which emerged in the process of the research itself. What is presented is a preliminary profile of the teaching of writing in one classroom.

II. THE STUDY

The Site.

The site for data collection was a sixth grade classroom in an urban elementary school (Commodore (pseudonym)) in West Philadelphia. The classroom from which the data was gathered was a low stream class of twenty-eight Afro-American boys and girls (twenty-one boys and seven girls). Almost all the children are in a Title I Reading program and many have been placed in the classroom because they have a reputation for being "discipline problems." The teacher is a young, vigorous and vocal Anglo-American who maintains a firm control of the classroom, a control which is not dependent on rigid prescription of rules, but rather on the force of her powerful and dramatic personality, and her ability to establish and manipulate her relationship with the class or with individual children, with a measure of aggressive personal confrontation which enables her to both praise/affirm or criticize/reprimand, as well as to interact with the children through verbal play, banter, jokes, role play and anecdote. (See Woods-Elliott, 1980)

The class is a highly verbal one - silence, when established by the teacher (usually for purposes of punishment, reprimand or talk of values and behavior), is devastating and intense. Students generally feel free to talk with the teacher and among themselves, although there are times (during testing or a specific routine) when talking is not permitted. The teacher encourages talk and verbal play between herself and the students but takes a controlling and initiating role in classroom talk of this kind. Students talk among themselves in order to collaborate on a reading or a writing task. Absolute silence is not rigidly maintained as the norm, and the teacher values the ability "to speak up" and assert personal identity, based on a knowledge of one's personal values. The notion of valuing oneself and of maintaining the integrity of one's beliefs is a core component of her approach to teaching.

Data Collection and the Role of the Researcher.

Data was collected over a three month period (two visits per week, a total of approximately seventy hours on site) by means of field notes detailing classroom activities and interaction and by occasional audio-tape recording of classroom discourse. The researcher joined the teacher and the reading aide as a "visiting teacher" and, as a participant-observer, was able to take a reading group occasionally, work with groups of children or with individuals in writing activities. Students and the teacher accepted the researcher's presence in the class and the children often turned to her to ask for help in reading, spelling and other learning activities. The teacher did not feel inhibited by the presence of a research observer and commented on the second day that she and the children were delighted to have the researcher in the class but that she would continue as she normally does because "I know what I want from the kids."

Gradually a working relationship developed between the researcher and the teacher and the reading aide - to the extent that on a week when the teacher had to be absent for a few days, she was happy to allow the researcher to join the Reading aide in taking the class for reading and writing activities.

Importantly, the relationship also evolved through discussion and sharing of the experience of the writing activities and writing process in the classroom. Particular writing events have caused teacher, reading aide and researcher to reflect on the issues of teaching writing and the "burden" (the teacher's phrase) which teachers experience as they try to establish the writing process. (See Part Two below.)

The remainder of the paper is divided into the following sections: Occasions for Writing in the class - writing as part of learning routines, writing in writing time; Unofficial writing done by children in the classroom; Writing - personal, social and collaborative; description and discussion of one writing event and its impact on the participants.

III. OCCASIONS FOR WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM

Writing is used in a variety of ways in the formal learning situation. The uses can be categorized as either (1) writing which accompanies or is part of learning routines or (2) writing done in specific writing time. My focus here is on teacher-directed writing. (See Fiering's report which follows for a broader focus.)

(1) Routine Writing

The teacher has established some standard occasions for the use of writing during the course of classroom learning routines. Writing is used for checking knowledge, for testing comprehension, for testing spelling, for reinforcement of information learned, for taking down homework, for doing homework, for copying words and sentences from the board, for making lists of information heard or read, and for taking notes from readers, dictionaries or encyclopedias for individual or group projects.

Writing of some kind accompanies almost every learning routine. So, for example, after a discussion related to social studies or after a talk by the teacher or someone else, the children write answers to questions about what they have just heard and discussed. This testing or checking procedure usually takes the form of a teacher directive to "Take out a piece of paper. Number 1 to 15. Doublespace." After this the teacher asks a series of questions which require the children to sift through the information just heard, or to search a map before writing the answer. The emphasis is often not on factual questions but on questions which require them to infer from the data. The teacher often says, "You have to think... Take your question apart... You can put some facts together and come up with the answer...."

Writing in this way serves not just as a check on information, for even after the questions have been completed the teacher does not grade the answers (she runs through the answers and the children check their own). Rather, it serves as an accompaniment to thinking about the material presented. Writing in these routines is tied to cognitive skills, "You've got to infer. You have to put the facts together and find the answer - from everything you've heard this morning," she comments.

Although the children may continue to chatter through this "test," the teacher uses the activity of writing as an excuse for quieting the class: "You've got pencils in your hands I don't want to hear voices!" and when the children offer verbal answers to some of the questions she says in a firm voice, "Write it Write it Write it." She emphasizes that thoughts can be put on paper and commented to the researcher, "I want them to know how you can put speech into writing."

When the teacher initiates the day's work or begins a particular teaching routine, whether in social studies, math, spelling or language arts work, she often signals the start of the routine with "Piece of paper. Name number 1 to ten..." or the signal may be the distribution of sheets of paper by her or a child appointed by her. The point is that while many of the learning routines in the class are carried on through verbal discussion, very often the routine begins with the distribution of paper for writing, and children getting up to sharpen pencils, so that the potential for writing activity of some sort as an accompaniment to the verbal routine is clearly present.

Writing is used for spelling tests and for exercises in specific writing skills - the mechanics and the conventions of written language. The children will be asked to copy an unpunctuated and un-capitalized piece from the board and told to correct and add the appropriate conventions as they do so. In one such episode, they were tested for handwriting skills along with a test for social studies knowledge in a fill-in-the-blanks passage which they were to copy from the board. In this exercise, handwriting was not singled out for special attention but rather it was seen as an adjunct to writing down information relevant to the subject.

Usually the teacher leaves the children to correct their own work, although in lessons dealing with mechanics, such as the punctuation routine, she works through the exercise with the whole class and corrects the passage on the board with their help. For the exercise in handwriting she collected their papers and glanced at them briefly before deciding that few were acceptable. She then directed them to write them again after which she marked a bold and large letter grade on each paper and commented encouragingly to each child. Such an action is unusual for her as she does not emphasize grading of their work. She does emphasize strong and positive feedback and encouragement.

There is an important distinction made by the teacher in her approach to the teaching of conventions of writing - i.e., the mechanics of spelling, capitalization, punctuation and so on. When these are taught, they are taught as skills independent of the writing which the children do which focuses on feelings, the writing which is for expression of thoughts and personal experience or for telling a story. This means that the teacher is not concerned, particularly at the beginning of the year, with how the children write but with what they wrtie. She may, however, occasionally remind them that they should think of indenting a paragraph or of using capital letters but generally mechanics are not her concern in writing time writing. (This will be discussed in the next section.) In fact, in writing time she often has to remind the children, as part of the process of getting them to write without fear and unhampered by notions of textbook workbook "correctness," that rigid rules do not apply. For example, after the children had performed an unscripted drama, she asked them to write the "story" but prefaced her remarks with, "I'm not grading spelling. I'm grading capital letters and periods. You have five minutes to tell me the story. Don't write one two three four five. Write it as a story. Tell me the story."

Her comments reflect her approach to de-emphasizing the ditto-sheet, single sentence understanding they had of writing when they entered her class at the beginning of the year. She explains that she spent all the time to November getting them to write in paragraphs and not in numbered sentences.

That the teacher makes a distinction between the teaching of the mechanics and the writing that goes on in writing time is very important. It means that writing time becomes a non-threatening situation and a time for free expression without hampering constraints. Her approach in writing time is to develop the children's confidence about verbalizing their emotions in talk or drama and then on paper too. In the writing time which followed the drama, the children were eager to write, sharing their writing with each other as they wrote and unwilling to stop when she signalled it was time to switch to another activity. One child said defiantly, "Oh. I ain't finished yet!." The teacher noted (to the researcher) that such an attitude was a marked change from the beginning of the year when the children apparently "hated" writing and were scared to write.

The teaching of mechanics and conventions is handled in a particular way so that, although the exercises by which she teaches the skills are specific to the task of teaching punctuation, or capitalization or standard versus non-standard English, the material on which the children work is often created by her and made personally relevant to the children. I mean by this that the sentences or paragraphs given to the children will use children in the class and details relevant to their activities as the basis for an exercise. Thus, for example, a punctuation exercise was a story about Lewis and his prowess at basketball. Sentences for correction or for rewriting in standard English tell of other children's exploits. A sentence or phrase used as the context for presenting a word in a spelling test is likely to refer to a child - sometimes quite pointedly - e.g., "Sensible behavior is not running through the streets like a wild banshee or carrying a screwdriver to school like a stupid fool. Right Maurice? Right Stacey?" The point here is that in doing this she contextualizes the children. They are made part of the learning episode by direct reference. They are part of the material studied.

Such contextualization may well be important because it offers an alternative to the presentation of dry meaningless exercises from text books and ditto sheets. In the punctuation exercise story about Lewis, the teacher was also included as an active participant, so that she and the children were made directly part of the material.

The teacher is very conscicus of the fact that their previous experience with writing has been in terms of rigidly prescribed exercises and ditto sheets. Her feeling is that they have had so much of this in their first five years of school that they do not know what writing is for - that it is a means of expressing thoughts and putting speech on paper. She wants them to understand the connection between thinking, talking and writing.

Class learning may also be the occasion for the children to write on the board. The teacher often sends groups of students to work out math problems or to write words or phrases on the board. They enjoy this activity and are always keen to be one of the people chosen to write on the board. So, for example, in one important episode, the teacher initiated a discussion of values and of the things which they valued. Having talked to them to clarify the meaning of the term she asked the children to write a list of the things they valued most. Then she asked individual children to write their items on the board. The children were eager to do this and were in some cases ambitious in their choice of words and unafraid to experiment with them on the board. (Julie attempted the word pediatrician). The words became the stimuli for continuing the discussion on values. The lesson discussion was a vital episode in the teacher's structuring of her relationship with the class - writing was not its focus although it was a key part of it.

Writing may also be the focal activity for individual or group projects undertaken by the children. For these they are required to read resource materials and write a description and then illustrate the material. Such projects may often be initiated by the children and may be the occasion for a collaborative activity, as children sort out information and decide what is to be written down and included. The teacher encourages such projects and provides information as they need it. Once Roy complained that there was no Black History being taught and that he wished to enter a competition for Black History month. (The teacher had altered her regular classroom activities to prepare the children for the California Achievement Test, which ignores minority material.) She said to him, "You mean you would be prepared to write for this?" He replied in the affirmative. "I'll get you books, I'll get you materials," she replied. "You go home tonight and jot down your ideas.

I don't care how you write it, ... get your ideas on paper." She seized this occasion and provided books for them to work with. For the next two weeks a group of children copied information from them. Roy began by simply copying the information from the text but towards the end of his second page he began to write in his own words. The movement from the language of the text to his own expression was a significant step because he had a real reason for writing information, and the teacher did not ignore the potential for allowing him to write and discover "what writing is for."

These are episodes in which writing is part of the formal learning routine of the class, although some projects often have an orientation towards writing for personal expression as opposed to being used as an accompaniment to other learning routines.

(2) Writing Time Writing

The second category of "official" writing in the classroom context is what I have termed 'writing time writing'. The stimuli and initiation for this writing is clearly underlain by the teacher's attitude that writing also serves a personal and narrative function and that these children need to understand that writing is an extension and an alternative of speech as a means of communication. She states that for her the way to writing is through speaking and that creating opportunities for the one is vital to the development of the other.

As will be seen later in this paper, such an attitude meshes with the importance of talk as an on-going adjunct to the children's writing process. At the same time, while she recognizes the importance of talk with the writing, she also works towards developing in the children the feeling that writing can be a quiet and personal process.

Very often, then, she seizes the "topic of the day's conversation" and allows them time to write about it - thus, the excitement of the Superbowl, of a movie on T.V. or the occasion of St. Patrick's day are the focus for writing. After the television showing of the film The Exorcist (it had really captured their imaginations) she suggested they write the story of it. She motivated them to describe all the gory details vividly (even in suggesting this she did not spare details). With much talking among themselves, the children did just this. "Let's go back here and write a story," Richard said and he and Ronald moved into a corner to write together, turning to the researcher every now and again to ask for a word.

Some of the children wrote about a football game, others chose another film. Most of the writing was collaborative, in the sense that they shared what they were writing with each other. The teacher spelled words as they needed them and did not try to get them to work out the words laboriously for themselves. Indeed, the story was dominant in the writing and the children invented spellings as they needed to. Occasionally the teacher urged them by saying "Write Stacey, Write Kevin" or "I don't care how it is spelled, just write" or "Don't ask me anything, just write." Nevertheless the children were free to ask her questions and to show her their work. Her emphasis was on writing and not on laboring over the niceties of the product. Every now and again, she would comment reflectively out loud, "I don't know where they get the idea that kids can't write" and "I'm going to have good stories today." These remarks were offered as verbal encouragement.

In writing time she permits the children to share their writing as they work, but occasionally she quietens them by stressing that now is primarily writing time: "There's too much talking and not enough writing. You had enough talking this morning, now you're writing."

Individual children bring their work up to be read and she comments encouragingly and tends to offer "content" comments rather than comment about mechanics: "You've got the ideas, now try to add some more." Writing time is an occasion for writing for self. Narrative discourse is the main focus. Corrections and mechanics are secondary considerations. The teacher is also unconcerned with their transposition of the syntax of their speech into their writing. She is consistent in her feeling that the children must first see that speech can become writing; that what is said in speaking can be said in written words.

Her emphasis in writing, as it is in reading activities, is to give them a positive feeling about themselves as writers (and as readers). She stresses giving them a sense of the worth of their own expression and as part of this perception of her task as a teacher, often displays their work, despite surface infelicities, because she believes that what they say is more important than how they say it. At the same time she feels that they must have a sense of completing the writing process by being involved in creating the display of their work.

The stimulus for writing time writing may also be more formal than the seizing of the occasion. The teacher will deliberately structure the writing event perhaps, by putting words or sentences on the board from which they are to construct a story, or by working from a class discussion of an idea or by specifying the characters and objects upon which a story can be based, or by involving the children in a spontaneous drama after which they write a story, poem, play, etc.

Writing in writing times may be "occasional" or may be initiated and directed by her with a formal stimuli. It is however, almost always personal and the emphasis is on expression of ideas and symbolizing experiences, or telling a story on paper.

The linking of skills and the message in the writing event is a difficult one for most teachers who do not wish to destroy the children's enthusiasm for writing. In this class, despite the fact that the teacher must sometimes remind the children not to dwell on rules and constraints, she also reminds them of some of the conventions they should watch out for. Sometimes these are humorously put: "No erasures, no blank spaces, I don't want to see any thumbprints, lipstick, cheese doodles or anything else..." (said prior to the handwriting and social studies exercise discussed earlier). Sometimes her directions seem rigid and competitive and evaluative in nature: "Pay attention to your rules, watch carefully." She then puts the "rules" on the board. "2 points for each line. 3 points for each capital letter. 4 points for each period. 5 points for each comma and 10 points for each correct sentence. That means that every sentence that has its capitals, its periods and its commas and has a noun and a verb in it gets an extra ten points." (These remarks preceded the writing of the story of the Exorcist.) These comments are quite literally reminders to try to incorporate into their writing some of the skills they have learned independently of the "real" writings. She points out that she wants them to want to write - to be bursting with things to say and that "correctness" is not important until they feel confident and begin to recognize that their writing can become a completed polished piece. For this reason she has not graded writing all year and while the children may write a piece for homework each week or write often in class, she may not see them. Producing these pieces is she feels a continuing part of the process of fitting writing into their lives. Gradually she has begun to work toward a transfer of the skills into their "real" writing, but this has only come in the middle of the second semester.

Up to this point her method for responding to the writing or for evaluating it has been to share writing with the whole class. She reads the children's stories aloud and this they delight in, often coming up behind her to help her as she deciphers their piece. I have noticed that children have taken their papers after she has read them aloud to try to fix the problem areas on their own and with no directive from her.

(I shall return to what I see as a significance of bringing writing into the social arena of the classroom as a vehicle for motivating these children to write, because it not only integrates reading and writing, but it also fits in with the notion of writing as a social and collaborative act.)

(3) Other Writing by Children in the Classroom

Another researcher working in this school has discovered how much "unofficial" writing is done by children - doodles, notes to each other, drawings accompanied by cartoon bubbles of thoughts or speech, or captions and labels and it is clear that often the children have occasions outside the school in which writing functions for a range of different purposes. (See section by Fiering) In this class children engage in such incidental or unofficial writing. One child for example, wrote a particularly vindictive note to another and this was intercepted by the teacher. The note contained a string of swear words (all "correctly spelled" the teacher remarked with irony). When she was asked to explain why she had written the note, the child stated that she could not express her anger aloud. Writing had obviously served a real communicative purpose for this child.

As noted earlier, the children also make use of the board space to play with written expression - they experiment together with words, with letters, with writing the teacher's name, with cursive script and so on. Two girls spent one long recess break copying words and phrases from their language arts book onto the board. The board seems to be an amenable space for writing experiments for these children - it is a large and unconfined space and is thus non-threatening in a way that standard pieces of brown lined paper are not. The way they use the board also suggests that they see writing as a collaborative activity, as an open event and this I suggest is vital to their definition of themselves as writers and of their understanding of writing and the process of writing.

The children extended this view of writing to an interest in the researcher's written field notes, often coming over to ask what has been written or to find out if they are "in them." "Am I in there today?" one child would ask and then eagerly look for his or her name in the notes. When they realized that I was taking close notes of all that occurred and was said, they became concerned that I should get all the details. The teacher also noted that last year when another observer had taken notes in the room, the children had become interested and had begun to write their own field notes. The teacher has also read the field notes to the class, so that they could see someone really using writing. The researcher's writing thus entered the public arena too, and as she read the notes the first time, two of the boys kept leaning over to me and saying (as the class reacted to the reading with comments or laughter), "Write that!" or "Take this down," feeling that these epsiodes illustrate in a sense Basso's comment that writing is a social act. Writing for these children, as has been noted earlier, is social in more than a public sense, it is collaborative. Their attitude toward helping each other write and to helping me write field notes, in sharing the activity of writing is important as a component of their understanding of writing. This teacher recognizes the social aspect of the writing event but is also aware of the need to show the children that writing is both a personal and social form of communication and that the process of writing can be both a collaborative and a private or individual one.

IV. WRITING: PERSONAL, PUBLIC, COLLABORATIVE

The freedom to collaborate in writing time is provided by the teacher. There are also times when she emphasizes that writing is a quiet and individual activity.

As has been noted, she is aware of what their past experiences of writing have been in the school context. "This school," she says, "has hardly touched writing." In her experience when the children first entered her class they had no concept of what it meant to write creatively - they numbered sentence by sentence, line by line. She set out therefore to give them some confidence and sense of accomplishment when they wrote stories or poems. This she has worked towards by using the "occasions" for writing as indicated earlier, and by de-emphasising the constraints of the written script during writing time. She has also stressed writing as a personal act and this has been a particular concern since they began to write journals mid-way through this semester. The journals were begun through a formal stimulus - a lesson in which she lead them for two and one half hours in a series of short writing tasks which they carried out in new writing books. The title page was simply, THIS IS ME. What followed were pieces on "words that describe me" - she put the words GOOD, GREAT, BAD, SAD on the board and asked the children to "Make some sort of design with those letters that describes you!"; words and short paragraphs to describe how they felt about themselves and about how they were growing and changing. The children could fold over their pages if they did not wish her to read what they wrote and some did this.

Concurrently with this particular writing activity, the children in one reading group were in the process of reading excerpts from the Diary of Anne Frank and, interested in this, they began to write their journals. The teacher encouraged this and gave them opportunities to combine the two activities, in other lessons. Journal writing for the group seemed to be a collaborative activity. Journals seem not to be necessarily private between friends in the group, and they share ideas and thoughts with each other as they write. Yet the teacher has also stressed the private nature of the journal, by indicating that there are things which she does not have to read, and by suggesting to children that there are occasions when they can channel their emotions into their journals. Thus, when Ronald attempted to hit another boy, she reprimanded him and said "If you're mad about something, you take out your journal and write about it."

Such an attitude is a reflection of her own definition of herself as a writer. She explained to me that until recently, writing has been an important part of her self-expression and although she now finds it easier to verbalize aloud, there are times when she wants to write and try to capture feelings or thoughts on paper. Writing, she mentioned when I asked her to write comments for me on field notes, "Stops me when I want it to flood out." Later however, she wrote copious comments for me and commented that once she got going it was easier than she expected.

Despite her current feelings about the place of writing in her life (it is as if she is a temporarily lapsed writer perhaps!), she takes as a priority, the concept of writing as personal expression, as verbalization of self. More than this, she very clearly and strongly sees writing as a "sophisticated accomplishment of the human mind." Toward the children, the emphasis is on letting the letters and words say something about them: "I don't care how you spell it, put it down in some design that expresses you," and "This is about you. There is no discussion for this writing. You have to look inside you."

This the children are beginning to understand and some remove themselves from the group to sit in corners or at separate tables to concentrate on their writing. Others continue to share the process. There is a sense that even writing done quietly can then be shared and they bring their work to her or the researcher or the reading aide. Occasionally she will stop the writing activity to read aloud from the piece a child has brought to her and to comment positively about it.

Class sharing between teacher and class and between student and student is important to the collaborative and public nature of writing but it also supports the concept of writing as a personal private event.

In one sense the presentation of writing to the class is like an extension of the verbal play and the telling of stories and anecdotes which are part of the interaction in this class. The class and not just the teacher becomes the potential audience for the children's writing.

The talk that accompanies the writing process is very important. Talk and sharing of the process occurs without prompting. It is as if the conversation about the football game, the movie, etc. which provided the occasion for the writing continues alongside the writing. There is an on-going conversation which the children use as they write and this is significant in the collaborative writing process. Writing seems to coexist with the talk. This teacher has made use of this on-going conversation to encourage the children to write and gradually she has developed in them a confidence in writing so that she can now turn their attention toward the individual process of writing and this means also turning their attention toward writing something which satisfies them not just in what is said but in how it is said.

The transition or the transference of the skills of writing into the children's writing for personal expression is often seen as the greatest "problem" in the teaching of writing. The teacher's burden is to enable children to write confidently and yet to also have the sense of accomplishment which comes with writing as correctly as the school board and society expect. For this teacher the transition between using skills in isolation and transferring them to the writing the children do in writing time, writing which they now do with greater confidence, is seen as a movement through the whole school year.

In the section which follows, I describe two days of intense writing activity during which time the children wrote, rewrote and copied their writing almost without a break. Not only was it a period of sustained writing activity for the children and one which thus pushed them to concentrate on one task and finish it despite frustration and, for many a certain amount of pain, but it also stretched the teacher's resources as she worked to accomplish the goal she had set for the children. The episode revealed something of the difficulties this teacher sees in the teaching of writing and it also provided the researcher and the teacher with a shared teaching and writing situation, one in which they were both participants, upon which to reflect and thus begin to isolate elements of the phenomenon of writing instruction.

The teacher described the experience of the two day workshop as the most "draining and frustrating" she had experienced all year. It was like this, she commented, because she felt that she had failed - failed to give the children a sense of what writing is and to give them a sense of accomplishment. She felt that they would "never want to write again." This was absolutely the opposite of all her efforts and intentions as they had underpinned the year's work. How had this "impasse" occurred?

V. THE WRITING WORKSHOP

The impetus for the sustained workshop was a display to be mounted in the District School Offices of work from schools in the district. The teacher decided to help the school contribute to this display and hoped that it would provide the children in this class with an opportunity to complete a project and see it presented as a finished product. This was not a decision of the moment, and for more than two weeks, she had been planning with the Reading Aide and telling the children the sort of display she thought they could mount as a class. She had however, decided that to drag out the writing for the display over a week or more would lead to boredom and less motivation for the children. Her intention was that, by writing workshop fashion for two days, they would be able to experience the writing process as one which starts, is worked through and is completed. The result would be a presentation of their work which would give them a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Such a direct act was, she judged, appropriate in terms of the progress the children had made during the year, from being too scared to write, to feeling that they could write something; from lacking mechanical skills, to perhaps being at the point where they could begin to see that they could incorporate into their writing some of the skills they had learned without being constrained by fear. The workshop was seen as one intensive activity which would perhaps enable them to understand what their writing could be, or what they could achieve as writers.

In a way the plan was a dramatic gesture which demanded much of the teacher and of the children, since even up to this point many of the children, while having reached a point where they were not afraid to write, could not as the teacher noted "give me a sentence with a noun and a verb in it."

In the first day of the workshop, the teacher handed out new exercise books and lead the children for two and one half hours through the series of writing about themselves, their feelings and aspirations. She involved them in playing with the form of the words: "Make some sort of design with those letters which describe you" and with the way they might interpret words personally: "Turn to your fourth page. Put your pencil down. Close your eyes. I want you to think of a word. Close your eyes .... Growing .... What different ways can you write that word to show what it means? Close your eyes and think.... Page five Tell me how you are growing. It's going to be different for everyone."

She worked from having them copy a title for the book from the board, to writing one word in a form of a design, to writing their feelings based on one word which described them, to writing these paragraphs on themselves and finally to writing a longer story related to one of the words they had chosen. The progression was carefully planned. The children had delighted in this, offering her many words to write on the board, talking among themselves, sharing their writing as they wrote, and bringing their pieces to her for comment.

After two and one half hours, the class was divided into three groups, one directed by the teacher, one by the Reading Aide, and one by the researcher. Each teacher then created a stimulus for the children to respond to in writing. The teacher's group wrote about sports events, the reading aide's group wrote stories related to materials they were reading in their readers - these were more factual pieces; the researcher's group wrote in response to a story and accompanying photographs about Australia.

The same groups worked through the second day. The emphasis on the second day, after the children had written their basic story, was on bringing the writing to a point where it could be displayed. Each of the teachers took a different approach as to how to achieve this "finished product." The reading aide working with the most capable group, read and corrected errors. The teacher took a firm hand in correcting and editing the children's papers. The researcher encouraged the children to work in pairs to reread, improve and rewrite each other's work. The children took this task very seriously and worked well in reading and improving their work. Children would write one draft and return it to the teacher or the researcher to read and comment. They were eager to change their work and to have the teachers respond to it. The whole class was busy with the writing activity. At one point, Kevin, taking his paper from the teacher again, said "This is fun!" The teacher remarked on this with a raised eyebrow to the researcher that he "hates writing."

During this morning's session the collaborative aspect of the children's writing process was obvious. Sharing and listening to pieces read out by the teacher was part of the process. By the end of the second morning the children had been writing and rewriting for over three hours.

At this point the teacher began to organize the actual display. She began to instruct the children to rewrite their pieces on clean white lined paper, rather than on scrap paper or brown paper. She had been a stern editor of the work of the children in her group and had explained to them (after she had noticed how tense one child became as she began to "correct" his writing) that she was the Editor, they were the Writers. This meant, she continued, that they had the ideas and the stories but she had the editorial skills and that when she altered parts of their paper they were not to feel upset but that they were to recognize that this writing was like an assembly line for making cars. By analogy she then explained that not everyone can have all the skills needed to make a finished product; they were the workers in the first part of the line, she was the worker at the end.

The researcher had not taken this approach - her approach had been to allow the children to write and rewrite with each other's help and some help from the teacher. Consequently, by the time the researcher left the class at lunch time, the children in her group had not achieved the same order of completed work as had the teacher's group or the children of the reading aide's group.

Field notes from that day reveal some of the disquiet the researcher felt as she left the class:

> We seemed to take different approaches to the writing and editing or correcting process. I was not aware of how much she (the teacher) was rewriting or editing - i.e., how much editorial license she was taking. I made the assumption

> that if I helped my group through the first major drafts of their writing (some of them wrote and rewrote three and four times for me) then since she knew what she wanted exactly for the display she would finish the project off. I had to leave before my group had reached a point of "Completeness" and I felt uneasy about that. It is difficult, I reflected on the way home, to work with another teacher when the other teacher has a very clear idea of what is needed. What is fascinating about the whole morning was the eagerness with which the kids wrote and tried to improve their work....

The disquiet was felt by the teacher also, and, as has been said, she felt an extreme sense of frustration as she tried to complete the display and have all the children write "perfect" pieces. In a long telephone conversation with the researcher that same night, she explained how puzzled and "upset" she was to find that the children in the researcher's group had been so "unfinished." She felt that they in particular, had had to incur her pressure to rewrite their work many times until they had achieved an acceptable standard for the display. The result, she had felt, was that the children in the class had felt the writing process as one of pain and not of pleasure. For her it has also been one of pain and she felt that she "didn't know what was going on in my own class today." She talked about how she felt that instead of being totally in charge of all the activities and interaction which occurred as the children struggled to produce pieces of writing seen by her as acceptable for display, she had found that with three people directing different groups of children toward an end product that she had in mind, the process had not concluded as she expected. The fact that she had to take the researcher's group and direct them to write and rewrite and rewrite once more until she was satisfied, had, she feared, soured the children's enthusiasm for writing. After the researcher had left the class, she had been more than firm in her demands that they should follow all the editorial changes she made on their stories and some children had written their pieces in some form or another more than five times. For these students the effort in rewriting and copying one piece so many times was considerable.

Why had she felt so perturbed by the events of the day? Why was she so afraid that the children would feel that this was a painful experience? And indeed, why did she fear that they might not want to write again? Why had she felt compelled to call the researcher and "unburden" her feelings at length?

When she talked of not being in control, of "not knowing what was going on...", what had she lost? What expectations had been upset?

The disquiet felt by both teacher and researcher was a result less of a difference in the way both think of the writing process and of the way to involve children in the process, then a result of the two teachers working with slightly different ends in mind for this particular writing event. As she pointed out, this was an occasion when the product had to be produced quickly so that there was less time for collaborative reworking among the children. Her conception of the writing process for the day was (1) The children write (2) Teacher "edits and correct" (3) Children rewrite. The researcher's conception of the process was (1) The children write (2) They help each other talk about and rework their pieces (3) The teacher helps them edit (4) They rewrite to complete.

Not only were the differences in the stages of production slightly different but the teacher and the researcher seemed to be working with different models for their interactions with the children in the process. As has been noted, the teacher took a strongly directive editorial role in responding to the children's work. She allowed whatever they attempted to express to stand unchanged, that is she accepted the content of their stories and she made substantial changes to spelling, syntax and other mechanical aspects of the writing. She then sent the children to copy what she had given them. She did not demand that they find their own errors or make their own corrections. The teacher was clearly the final person on the production line, as she had explained the workshop process to the children. The researcher worked on the assumption that her task was to help the children compose their own pieces with a minimum of editorial assistance from her. Hence, her attempt to have them read each others' pieces and help each other find out how to change or improve, including correct, what they were writing. She made few marks on their papers, and instead spent time questioning them about what they wished to say, and quietly directing them to find their own errors. The writing process proceeded more slowly and less directly in the researcher's group.

Thus, in the time constraint of this occasion, step number two in the researcher's model complicated the way to achieve the goal of "finishing the display: in a short time, so as to give the children a sense of how one piece of writing can be completed. (Note: the teacher helped the children finish.) Miss W's frustration increased as she took up where the researcher had left off. She pushed the children to produce an appropriate piece of writing. It was with the pressure of this final stage, unanticipated by her, that she was most concerned. It was true, she admitted, the children in the researcher's group had written longer and "more creative" stories but they had had to experience what she perceived as extra demands on their concentration and motivation. Would the children feel satisfied with what they had experienced and would they as Kevin had exclaimed earlier, still be able to say "This is fun!"?

What was at stake for this teacher such that her experience of the writing workshop provoked her to turn to the researcher for explanation and thus created an opportunity for articulation of her expectations and assumptions about the children's progress and her aims for them as developing writers? The teacher had seen the workshop as a possible "turning point" in the way they viewed their writing, so that they could see what it meant to "Start writing, keep writing, rewriting and copying to get it done." She felt strongly that they had to have the experience of feeling the struggle of polishing a piece of writing and of "knowing how to deal with it" (the process). Along with this she wanted them to feel the positive reinforcement of her comments and response to their writing and of the display. The approach she had taken throughout the year had been to encourage the children to feel comfortable and free to write. For this reason she had, as was noted earlier, scarcely graded or commented on their written work, although she had read some of their stories to the rest of the class. Her approach to the children's experience of being writers was, during the workshop, consistent with her overall approach. She did not stress errors or corrections; these she took as her responsibility so that the children were free to express themselves in any way they could and so that in the end, they could see and feel that they had written and produced a "publishable" piece of work. What was seen to be important was the process of starting a peice and the, after her editorial advice, finishing the piece by copying it as many times as necessary to make it ready for display.

That this process did not go as she had intended; that it ran slightly counter to her expectations, threatened in some way her concept of how she worked to involve the class in the writing process. She had stressed that the act of writing should have a particular meaning for the children; that they should arrive at a point of wanting to write. But the extended pressure of the intensive workshop, seemed potentially to challenge the consciously planned for growth of the children's confidence with pen and paper and their enthusiasm for using writing as a means of self-expression. At stake in this workshop was not only the children's attitude to writing and the meanings they attached to the act of writing, but the fulfillment of Miss W's aim for teaching these children what it meant to become a writer. As such her relationship to these children was also tested by the workshop experience. She had expected that two days or three, of constant writing with a goal in mind would demand much of the class. She had not expected that the process would be extended, as it was.

The researcher's assumptions about responding to and interacting with children as they wrote altered the expected sequence of activity. Thus it was that the researcher, who was trusted as a teacher colleague, in assuming her role as teacher, affected the interaction of the classroom, and challenged in some measure the teacher's sure direction of the activities and relationships she had established in the class.

The teacher felt so strongly about the workshop experience in terms of her own feelings about the task of teaching writing that she emphasized to the researcher that all this must be written up, because she felt that it had revealed to her the teacher's "burden,"; that of many to move the children from the stage of non-writing to the stage of knowing what a finished "end product" might be for them. For her, this means being able to ensure the use of writing skills, mechanics, in children's writing without discouraging already reluctant non-writers from writing. This she states "takes all a teacher's energy" and it is thus, no wonder that teachers don't teach writing. Because it involves many cognitive skills, reading and thinking and a knowledge of written conventions, in a class such as this one where children are low achievers and lacking in personal confidence, many variables have to be handled in teaching the children to write. When they have reached sixth grade and still can't write a sentence, then the teacher has a very difficult task to develop their skills as readers and writers.

This teacher feels the burden of this responsibility very much as she recognizes that after this year their transfer to high school and junior high will mean that less time is spent on teaching the skills they are already supposed to have acquired.

More than in teaching any other area of the curriculum, this teacher believes, the teaching of writing demands structure. By this she means that when one teaches a lesson which concentrates on writing per se, then one has to know ahead of time exactly what one is going to do, what one is going to expect; and how one is going to achieve one's goal. She carefully plans each writing time. The steady progression from copying to writing an extended story which marked the writing workshop described here, is an example of such a structure.

The separation of the teaching of the mechanics and the experience of writing for the first part of the school year is the result of her over-all plan for accomplishing her goal of having the children both develop confidence in themselves as writers and learn the conventions of written text.

The choice of a workshop, an intensive two days of writing for a particular purpose, as a way of thrusting the writing process as a totality at the children is a key point in her plan for their development as writers. The writing workshop is not a technique to be used constantly, she points out - for its impact on the children is considerable. But she feels that at sixth grade level, particularly with this group of children, the sustained process of the workshop is "a good way to show sixth grade what writing is."

She planned another workshop, to take place four weeks after the one described here with a similar structure.

In the intervening weeks, she worked with the children, using a language arts book of word puzzles, games and exercises, with writing skills which stress not just mechanics but syntactic aspects of writing. Such exercises involve some simple sentence combining, use of relative clauses and so. The children enjoy working with this material and she does much of the work with them orally before asking them to write. As with much of the other work she "contextualizes" the children, creating sentences which use them as characters, to which the children respond positively. They offer examples for the class to work with as well. One child suggested an example involving the researcher: "You should do one with Claire - Claire is from Australia. She is teaching our class. Claire who is from Australia is teaching our class," suggested Lisa. Other children then suggested versions of the same sentences. They regard such exercises as a game or puzzle.

They also recognize the way knowledge can be personalized and how they and others can be fitted into the learning routine.

As the teacher builds the transition between mechanics and the teaching of skills, she explains that these exercises and puzzles are "used to make your writing less choppy and more mature." The work with these exercises follows the pattern of other writing routines; from oral work, talking with her or with each other to writing.

There has been a movement from the beginning of the year toward more and more writing; more writing of answers to reading comprehension, more writing in individual projects, more writing of notes, more writing of language arts exercises and so on. Such writing is still accompanied by talk before, during and after the writing - but gradually children are writing independently and writing more in both of the categories described in this paper, i.e., writing in learning routines, and writing in writing time.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study of phenomenon of writing instruction is demanding. The researcher becomes immediately involved in describing, illuminating, and analyzing a complex process.

The study of teacher intervention in the child's development as a writer involves the consideration of many variables - the child's process; the teacher's response; the teacher's concept of writing and of the children as writers and as literate individuals; the children's concept of themselves as writers; the uses of writing which obtain in the classroom and outside it, in the teacher's life and in the lives of the children.

All these variables interact in the classroom when the teacher uses writing as part of the classroom routine and more particularly when she approaches the task of teaching writing. The process of making writing a part of the children's lives in a way which is appropriate to the tasks and expectations of the school system and of society is far more complex than "teaching skills" through standard exercises.

Writing is a means of symbolizing one's experiences: it is a secondary symbol system according to Vygotsky, and thus a powerful instrument of thought. He comments thus:

> "... writing should be meaningful for children...an intrinsic need should be aroused in them and ...writing should be incorporated into a task that is necessary and relevant for life. Only then can we be certain that it will develop not as a matter of hand and finger habits but as a really new and complex form of speech" (1978).

In this brief study, a profile is offered of one teacher who attempts to make writing meaningful for the children she teaches. Her task, however, is not only to make it meaningful but to enable them to use it effectively and appropriately. The processes for achieving both and thus for handling the complexity of the writing process is enormous. We know little about how teachers, good teachers of writing, do this.

Studies like this one, which explore the writing process in the classroom context from the perspectives offered by ethnographic research and from current research in the composing process, can tell us much about how teachers teach writing, about how they intervene in the writing processes of children and about how children respond and interact with teachers in the writing vents which are part of the interaction of the classroom.

PART TWO. TEACHER AND RESEARCHER: EVOLUTION OF A WORKING RELATIONSHIP

I. INTRODUCTION

When the ethnographer enters the world of the classroom as a participant observer, rapport between the teacher, the teacher's aide, the students and the new arrival is not necessarily established immediately, nor is there automatic acceptance of the "outsider" into the classroom space and daily business of the participants. There is a process of mutual negotiation of space and interaction. The negotiation will take different forms because of the personalities of the participants, the expectations of teacher and researcher and of students, and the roles established for teacher and researcher.

Initially, the researcher is an unknown adult in a room in which the teacher and students know the ways of operating. The mere presence of another adult as observer almost certainly affects the words and actions of those observed in ways that may not be immediately obvious. When that observer enters the classroom with an intention of being more than a "fly on the wall," of in some way taking an active role in the daily business of the classroom, the negotiation may become all the more problematic. Yet negotiation is vital to how research is conducted and how it is received by the educational community. In particular, it is vital to the way the teacher reacts to the stranger in her classroom.

The relationship that obtains between the key participants in classroom-based research has been seen as a "humane relationship" or dialogue with a key informant (Erikson, 1977) labelled as the "researcher-practioner dilemma (Smith, 1980). For most researchers the situation is not the rather ideal situation described by Hugh Mehan (Learning Lessons, 1979) in which the teacher, a university professor who had taken a sabbatical to work full-time as an elementary school teacher, was fully aware of the perspective and of the research tradition within which the research was being conducted. Her relationship from the start was clearly not just that of teacher but also of research collaborator. Such is not the case when most researchers enter the classroom. It is more the relationship described by Florio and Walshe in an occasional paper, The Teacher as Colleague in Classroom Research, (1978). In this research, the expectations and assumptions of the researcher (who had been a middle school teacher before becoming a doctoral student) and the teacher underwent considerable change over a two year period, during which the naturalinvolvement of both participants also changed. The fact that Florio had been a teacher did alter the way she participated in the activities of the classroom, in a way that someone who had not been a teacher might not experience. She notes, "Despite a background in the literature of classroom interaction and experience as a non-participant classroom observer, the researcher found herself "just teaching" as she spent more and more time with the children in this class.... She was not very different in this role than she had been as a teacher in her own classroom several years before." (Florio and Walshe, 1978)

The fact that she was present this time as a researcher did cause her to spend a greater period of time in "disciplined reflection" on the classroom: "She...had more time and tools (including video tapes) for reflection about classroom events...." Similarly, the teacher came to feel that she had a real part in the research process: "She realized that, although teachers do not have time to be ethnographers in their own classrooms, they can become more observant participants." Florio and Walshe go on to describe the "blending of their respective roles," and the way this affected the process of educational change in that particular classroom. Thus, they talk of a collegial relationship evolving between the teacher and the researcher in which the "problem domains" or individual needs of the participants (the researcher and the teacher) are met by the process of in-class research. (1978)

Such a blending of roles, we would suggest, might not have been possible if the researcher could not move easily into the role of teacher and the teacher was not "open about the operation of her classroom and had a reputation of willingness to try new things." Other factors influenced the relationship which evolved in the two years of the study, but the ability of the two participants to move toward and into the role of the other would seem to have been of major significance.

Let me now explore some of the issues raised by Florio and Walshe's monograph, and suggest others important to ethnographic field research, as they emerged in the evolution of a working relationship between one teacher and an observer, who was not originally a member of the research team, but whose opportunity to move into a school and a classroom was very much dependent on the relationship already established by other researchers in the project.

II. ISSUES

(1) Negotiating the Researcher's Role: Access.

Entering the classroom - two experiences. I had approached one of the Principal Investigators engaged on the Ethnographic Monitoring project because I wished to undertake a pilot study for doctoral research on the teaching of writing and the interaction between teacher and students in the classroom as the students learned to compose. The relationship already established with schools involved in the Ethnographic Monitoring project (described in Part II of the main report of the project) and with the principals was such that there was no hesitation in suggesting that a teacher with whom one of the researchers had been working might be interested in having me in her classroom. The arrangement for entry was handled by that researcher and it was she who organized the first meeting between the teachers and myself.

Meeting two teachers (not me) was suggested in order to discover jointly which classroom situation was most appropriate for study, given my particular interest in the teaching of writing, and the particular needs of the teachers. The understanding was that I would spend time in both classes before a decision either to concentrate on one or the other, or to focus on one aspect of the teaching process in both.

Both teachers welcomed me without undue express of inhibition about the presence of another adult in the classroom, no doubt because both had had satisfactory experiences with other observers in their rooms during the first year of the project. Miss W., the teacher in the low track sixth grade class, (with whom I eventually worked exclusively), greeted us briskly and cheerfully, explaining imeediately what the class was currently doing (spending 15 minutes talk time about the Super Bowl) and adding in an off-hand manner, "Even though you're here I won't be doing anything different!" She indicated where I, the new researcher, should sit and turned to her class again. As the class quietened down after the talk time she introduced me as some who would be taking a lot of notes about the class and who would be "writing about what happens here." As I responded, one of the children noticed my accent (clearly not American) and Miss W. asked them if they could identify it and guess where I came from. This le to a guessing game and an exercise in map reading to find the researcher's country and city of origin.

Miss W. took this opportunity to review the children's map reading skills, explaining the terms "continent, country, island, peninsula " and asking the class to identify the six continents by placing their hands and fingers on relevant parts of their maps. She then moved out of her seat and suggested that I sit in it and tell the class a little bit about myself or "about anything - your dog or something." A little taken aback, I took her suggestion at face value and began to talk about my dog - a breed peculiar to my country - explaining how, as a sheep and cattle dog, he fits into the natural habitat and agricultural life in Australia. The discussion of which my description formed a part went on for 45 minutes with me in the teacher's seat directing the children's inquiries. The teacher took part in this discussion also, leading the class into calculations of time zone differences and consideration of differences in accents and other related topics.

For the rest of the morning, the teacher directed the children in a listening comprehension exercise based on the preceding discussion. She asked the questions - "What country does Claire's dog come from?" "What clothing would Australia be likely to export?"- and the children write the answers. Many of the questions demanded that the children infer from what they had heard and this she stressed as a vital process: "I don't care if you're wrong - as long as I can see you thinking... You've got to infer. You have to put all the facts together and find the answer from everything you've heard this morning."

In the second classroom, the teacher was a little hesitant about having someone else in the classroom and immediately suggested that there were aspects of the curriculum which she was a little unsure about and with which she felt the researcher might be able to help her. She introduced me to the class and then showed me a seat to the side and front of the class. She then went on with her lesson and only at the end of the morning did she speak to me again about her class and the children, again suggesting that I could take the class for some work on English grammar and composition skills.

Negotiating roles with two teachers: different processes. These two moments of entry illustrate an important difference in the way in which teachers may begin the process of negotiating a role and a place for the researcher in the classroom communities they had already established. (The time was the beginning of second semester, the teachers and children had established patterns and ways of interacting, verbally and non-verbally - characteristic "participant structures" as Susan U. Phillips has labelled the structural arrangements of interaction in the classroom (Phillips, 1972, p. 377).)

Miss W. (the teacher with whom I eventually worked) determined from the beginning that I was not going to "alter" her way of conducting the class or of acting. If she could use my presence within the classroom, she would do so - hence her "testing" me when she thrust me in front of the class immediately and her use of me as the focus for a range of skills and writing activities for the morning lesson. I heard later from the researcher who had arranged for my entry into that room that Miss W. liked having me there and felt that she could work with me because she knew that "...she knows classrooms and knows what to do with the kids." Miss W. also commented later in the first week that the children liked having me in the class. She also confided to me that she was not interested in having any one in her classroom who could not "fit in," meaning, I understood, one could not adopt a "teacherly" role. My first experience of leading the class in discussion had been a test of my ability to enter the participant structures of the classroom in a quasi-teacher role. Clearly the initial experience was a test, not an indication of what would be regularly required of me. After this first encounter, Miss W. accepted my presence in the classroom but did not expect or suggest an active involvement by me for three weeks. During this time, I took copious field notes, asked some questions of her and of her Reading Aide (Mrs. D.) but attempted to limit these so as not to impose on her or to suggest any sort of judgemental attitude. The three weeks were a time of establishing my presence and my interest in the class. I shall return to describe the evolution of my involvement in the class later in this report.

Mrs. S., the second teacher, appeared less confident of her relationship with her class and of my presence in the class. She invited me to answer questions which the class had written out about Australia and this I did for two lessons. This, and a renewed request that I should teach a lesson on grammar, together with some general discussion of what she felt about her teaching and her reaction to her class, were the extent of my involvement in her classroom, although she and the children greeted me warmly whenever I appeared to take up my observer's position. Later, when I had decided to devote all my time in the school to work with Miss W.'s class (see below), Mrs. S. said that her children felt I had slighted them because I was not coming in to see them. She herself remained friendly and understood my decision to concentrate attention on one classroom.

Choosing the focus in one classroom. At the end of three weeks of waiting and watching in the two classrooms, I made a decision to spend time in one class. The decision was made on a number of grounds, but primarily on the basis of my interest in the dynamics of interaction which obtained in Miss W.'s class. There an aggressive (firm, lively and loudly dramatic) teaching style contributed to and created what I felt was a particularly interesting interactional pattern and one deserving of closer description and analysis. (The teacher has been examined in an unpublished paper (Woods-Elliott, March 1980).) Miss W. was also open and articulate about her own teaching methods and her intentions - her teaching platform or concept of her role, and willing to read my field notes, comment on them or tape record her impressions of the class and the activities and interactions between herself and the children. Further, she expressed an interest in the problem of teaching writing and indicated that she had strong views of how one should go about the daily classroom business of teaching children to write.

The classroom community. On the third day of my sojourn in her class, Miss W., the Reading Aide and I talked over morning coffee, with both of them contributing their impressions of the "positive atmosphere of progress" in the class since the beginning of the school year. They talked also of the children's relationship to the teacher, as the Reading Aide pointed out that the children were incredibly "protective" of Miss W.; that they both loved and hated her and that they would rather spend their time in the class than out and that they would rather not go to recess if they could stay in the room with her. Miss W. shared her expectations of the children, and her perceptions of how much they had changed since they first came into the class at the beginning of the year. Then "...they would have climbed the walls if I had let them." Both emphasized that the children were now more controlled, more confident of themselves and more responsive to each other. The close collegial relationship existing between the teacher and the Reading Aide was obvious, both in their discussions with me and in their on-going interaction in the classroom and their mutual response to the children during lessons. (This relationship has been described in a report (Woods-Elliott May 1980) on the role of the Reading Aide.)

(2) Trust and Confidentiality.

Their willingness to include me in their interactions and their preparedness to share their thoughts about the class, the work, the individual students and school matters generally, enabled me to feel comfortable about my place in the classroom community. The term "community" is appropriate, I believe, because there was a sense that once the door was closed, everything that happened was between the participants in that room and not for any one else outside. Both Miss W. and Mrs. D. (the Reading Aide) made comments suggestive of this. My handling of my field notes and my constant referral of my notes to Miss W. also helped establish my credibility and trustworthiness as an "inside"member of the classroom.

It is clear that the issue of trust and of the establishment of a relationship of data and information gathering "in confidence" is important when the researcher - stranger enters the classroom community and steps into the interactional structures negotiated between students and teacher and much dependent on the teaching style of the teacher. In a sense, the information one gathers by observation or by interview (formal or informal) is as confidential as that which the lawyer or doctor might elicit from a client or patient. (The analogy here is to the "confidential" nature of the information and not to the client-lawyer, patient-doctor relationship.)

The researcher's ability to adopt the "teacherly" role, mentioned earlier, and to accept initiatives made by the teacher rather than imposing her own assumptions or concerns, as well as her willingness to wait for the teacher to indicate acceptance of the researcher as a participant in some degree in the structure of the classroom interactions, were vital to the gradual negotiation of her role and place. For example, after three weeks of furious note taking and quiet observation, the researcher was instructed by Miss W. to bring a tape recorder, so that she could make my task easier.

Field notes as a factor in negotiating role. It was also at this time that I offered Miss W. my field notes. She took them, indicating that, as she had mentioned early in the semester, she was really interested in seeing what she was doing from an outsider's point of view. She took them away and scribbled comments through them, adding information related to particular incidents or in response to queries I had entered in the margin. On the last page of the notes she scattered a mess of comments about her use of texts and activities - these she handed to me with a comment that I should turn my tape recorder on so that she could explain at length. This I did and she talked quickly and determinedly for twenty minutes about her aims in teaching and about how she saw the curriculum being developed throughout the year, in relation to the needs she perceived for the children. She also decided to read some of my field notes to the class. She explained to the class that she was going to read them "Claire's story of this class." This she did and they took great interest, laughing as they recognized a familiar incident or upon hearing their own names. As they listened, I took notes on their reactions and on T.'s presentation. Richard, who was seated close to me, turned to me at one point and said "Take this down!" and thereafter asked "Did you get that?" or made gestures such that I should be noting some of the things that are said. (Often in the weeks that followed children wanted to read my notes, or add information to them, or listen to my tape recordings of class interaction.)

Through the mediating influence of my field notes - and the teacher's acceptance of them as accurate ("I can't believe you've got everything!", she commented after the first set.) and her offering them to the class so that they all participated in the recording and observation process in some manner, my role as a recorder and observer of the class interaction and activities was established Note that the researcher needs to find a way of offering field notes, or of reporting her findings of the classroom in such a way that judgement and evaluation are not implied and so that there is a mutual appreciation of the discovery process.

(3) Negotiating the Researcher's Role: Towards Collaboration.

Active Participation. After the first three weeks, I was still not much more than a dedicated observer of classroom events and an interested recorder of daily activities. I had, however, been accorded a role in the interaction of the classroom so that I was less the stranger and outsider and more the accepted spectator. I was still a "minimally participating observer," as Erikson has described the unusual role of the researcher (1979). Erikson has written with a caution about what he calls the "mereness" of ethnography and has indicated that one aspect of the "mereness" is that the term "participant observer" needs to be qualified in order to account for the fact that often despite an immersion in field experience, the researcher is only a "partially participa[illegible] observer." He notes that:

> By calling ourselves participant observers without qualifying the term we may be exaggerating the actual amount and range of our participation in the settings we study.

He goes on to suggest a significant aspect of the researcher's active participation in the interaction and activities of the site being studied:

> Unless we are vulnerable to and accountable for how the action happens in the same ways (or at least in somewhat similar ways) as are other participants in the setting we are studying, we can only claim a very partial kind of participation. (Erikson, 1979)

I stress this aspect because in classroom research the perhaps catalytic affect of the presence and contribution (which can be of many kinds) of the adult from the outside may well be the initially most powerful consequence of ethnographic research in educational settings.

Being as accountable and vulnerable as the participants in the classroom community for the ways things happen in the daily business of the class means that the researcher is in a position to be part of any educational change process that may occur. Florio and Walshe have indicated that in their experience as researcher and teacher in a classroom, changes and development of new perceptions about the children or about the conduct of lessons was product of the "joint enterprise" of teacher and researcher. They comment thus:

> This system essentially delegates the agent of change role not to an outside consultant, but to the people who in many ways, possess the most direct and explicit power and responsibility to do things in the setting. (Florio and Walshe, 1978)

My active participation in the classroom developed gradually and was dependent on the teacher's initiative and my willingness to be used as a resource for classroom activities, for group work in reading or writing, or for work with individual children, whenever the teacher needed an extra hand. During the semester, I responded to Miss W.'s requests to take a reading group when she divided the class between herself, me and the Reading Aide or when she sent one or two children to my desk, so that I could "hear their spelling." Often when the children were working independently she would indicate that the Reading Aide and I were to move around the room supervising or helping children while she concentrated on specific children at her desk.

On one occasion, Miss W. had to be absent from the school for several days and was replaced by a substitute teacher. Miss W. however, informed the substitute that she had "... a very reliable aide and a good researcher who know what they are doing with the children." She thus set an outline of work to be completed but left the aide and the researcher to carry out the daily activities, reading, writing, math and so on. The reading aide took primary responsibility for the activities while I, the researcher, supported her as she divided the class into groups for various tasks. After this incident, Miss W. greeted the researcher with a delighted expression of affirmation as she commented that she had heard from the substitute that I had really been able to control the children and organize them to work. At times "... you sounded just like me!" she concluded.

Her preparedness to accept me as a "substitute" for a brief period was in indication of how easily she and the children accepted me as a working member of the community. The children referred to me as the third teacher in their class.

(4) Participation: Three Roles.

My participation in the classroom interaction was not just as a quasi-teacher but as another participant in the daily conversations which characterized the verbal interaction of the classroom. This operated in three distinguishable ways.

In one role, I was made part of the classroom conversation when Miss W. referred to me or directed a comment to the children via me. In this respect I was used rather like a straight man to the entertainer or a confirmer and support for actions or statements she would make to the class. For example, when she reprimanded Lewis for doing badly on a test she pushed him to say aloud that next marking period he would, "Make Honor Roll." And in a loud and demanding tone she insisted that he repeat the phrase in response to her question, "What are you going to do this report card?" When after a several repeated thrusts, her question was finally answered by Lewis, with his eyes downturned and his voice directed to his chest, "Make Honor Roll," she said, "I didn't hear you!." Lewis repeated the phrase a little louder. At this point Miss W., turned to me and asked, "Did you hear that Claire?" I replied, "I did but I had to work hard at it." To which she responded, directing her voice loudly in Lewis's direction, "We don't want to have to work hard to hear Lewis, what are you going to do?" Lewis finished the interaction by shouting, "MAKE HONOR ROLL." To which Miss W. smiled broadly and turned to the rest of the class.

The researcher's part in this exchange is slight - but the teacher's use of her as another respondent or as a silent "prop" for her interactions with the children was not unusual.

I was also drawn into the verbal interaction of the classroom during those frequent moments when, as the children worked at their desks, Miss W. and Mrs. D. carried on a lively conversation about their out-of-school activities, telling anecdotes about ordinary daily events. This conversation operated above the bowed heads of the students and might have been initiated by Miss W.'s, "Good morning. How was your weekend?" or "Claire you wouldn't believe what happened ...!"

In a second role, I was made an instructional resource to the teacher apart from classroom interactions. Just as on the first day, Mrs. W. had taken advantage of my presence to construct a lesson around the information I had contributed to the class, so she continued to use my presence, as she did also that of the Reading Aide as a "sounding board" for her own concerns and as a supportive listener as she articulated her own views on her teaching style and on her planning and conducting of curriculum activities.

SHe willingly responded to my questions about how and why she did certain things and on occasions when I was absent for a day, she would save all the materials she had used, annotating them with information about how she had used them and where these activities fitted into the classroom planning. Occasionally, she would ring me at home to tell me of something that had happened when I had not been in the classroom - these were always opportunities for long discussions of her role and her ideas. In these and other conversations, I would contribute ideas or anecdotes from my own teaching experience and these seemed to function less as suggestions for change in her practice (for she was very sure of what she was doing) and more as further reflections on her situation and extensions of her articulation of her concerns as a teacher. It is from such conversations that one may discover much information about the "intentionality" of many of the actions and moves made by the teacher in the classroom. In these conversations, there is an opportunity to add to one's understanding of the participant structures negotiated by the teacher and the students in their classroom world.

A third role emerged, I think, when the long conversations about the class, and about Miss W.'s teaching and her concept of what she wanted to achieve in the class, travelled into the realms of personal issues and concerns. Miss W. was seriously considering leaving teaching, because she felt she had given as much as she could and was struggling with persistent ill-health. She felt a cynical concern, even despair, about the difficulties some of the children in her class were having and were likely to continue to have and which she felt she could not, for all her work, prevent. In these conversations (carried out in the classroom, or in the yard during recess, or by telephone at night), I was a supportive listener, and my role became as Powermaker has described it, that of "stranger and friend" (1966), although the "stranger" was rapidly being transformed into that of "familiar presence." Often Mrs. D., the Reading Aide, was part of these long conversations too. (Mrs. D. and

Miss W. had worked together for two years and had, as has been noted earlier, a close and collegial relationship, Mrs. D. being Miss W.'s confidante about all matters to do with the children, and the school.)

(5) One Incident for Change.

As I have reported in the first half of this report, one incident in particular challenged the relationship which had evolved between the researcher and the other members of the class, - in particular between the teacher and the researcher. The incident is instructive in terms of the "vulnerability and accountability" of the active participant researcher. Briefly summarized, (see the full description in Part One above), the incident occurred thus: Towards the end of the semester, Miss W. decided to involve the class in a writing workshop over a period of three days in an effort to produce a display of writing for a School District Language Arts exhibition. She was annoyed that only she in the school had decided to "make the effort" to do something and was determined to push the children as far as she could in order to present some appropriate work.

She engaged the help of the Reading Aide and the researcher to help the children devise, write, rewrite and shape for public presentation some stories based on a variety of stimuli. (These included books one group had been reading, sports telecasts, and pictures of the researcher's dog - once more put to work as a source of classroom inspiration.)

After Miss W. had spent some time carefully leading the children into the writing process, for many of them were not accomplished writers, and, as Miss W. noted "...about ten can't even put a subject and a verb together in a sentence," - each of the adults took charge of one group of children to help them write. The writing process went on for two days. Each one of us worked to have the children finish a story they could pin to a display.

At the end of the second day, I had to leave the class, knowing that on the third day Miss W. was to finish the project and deliver the display. As my field notes indicate, I was uneasy about the way things were progressing. My children were working more slowly than those in the other two groups, for I had certainly been less directive in my approach to their early efforts and had emphasized having them help each other improve their successive drafts, whereas Miss W. and Mrs. D. were more inclined to mark corrections and demonstrate a more decisive editorial hand on individual pieces of writing. The anxiety was not mine alone.

That night Miss W. called me, and so began a three-hour conversation about what had happened in the classroom in the last two days. Miss. W. began by saying that she didn't know what had happened in her class and she wanted to find out why she felt unhappy about what the children in my group had done. Our discussion travelled in many directions, touching the immediate issue of our different approaches to helping the children write, to the difficulties of taking children from start to finish on a writing assignment, and the changes in how a classroom operates when there are three teachers working, although only is really "in charge."

At the end of the conversation, as we mutually explored ideas, she exclaimed, "I know, Claire, what was really the trouble in my class today... I felt that I had lost control of what was going on...I didn't know everything that was happening in the class." She felt no displeasure with what I had been doing with the children, - for it was not so different from what she was doing. I had simply taken more time over certain stages of the composing process. We compared our different stages of guiding the children's writing. Her conclusion was, "This has been the most frustrating and the most exciting day of my teaching life." It had been frustrating because what she had planned had been temporarily thwarted and because she had not known, planned or predicted the changes in the participant structures and interactions of the class nor had she anticipated their implications. But she was excited by what we had discussed about the children's writing, about the children's ability to be intensely involved in a difficult task for a long period of time and by what she had articulated about her own teaching style and expectations.

The display was completed on time. In my absence on the third day, Miss W. guided the children to finish their stories and reported to me that they still felt "good" about what they had done so that she was confident that she could again ask them to write intensively for a long period of time. Next time, she said, she would try my way of having the children help each other to write rather than taking a firm "editorial" hand.

(6) "Stranger and Friend"

Central to the incident was the very fact of the presence of another adult in the classroom who had a way of teaching or working with children slightly or very differently from that of the teacher and her aide (who in this classroom tended to work as the teacher did - each knew what the other expected). In an occasion of heightened classroom activity the impact of the outsider (the active participant observer) on the established participant structures of the classroom community provoked discussion and illuminated aspects of the teacher's perceptions of herself and her way of teaching. The presence of the researcher as a participant in the writing workshop had significant implications for the realization in practice of Miss W.'s approach to teaching writing. Further, the ambiguity of the researcher's role, (although she had achieved credibility partly because of her experience as a teacher and for her ability to take a "teacherly" role) had meant that in the workshop situation there was a possibility of dissonance in teaching styles, aims and expectations. Such dissonance did indeed, occur and had implications for the teacher's concept of her role and for the already carefully developed relationship she had been building between herself and class, as young writers. She feared that as a consequence of her rigorous demands on them, as she worked to carry the writing from the researcher's group to completion, that the children would end up "hating" to write: An outcome that would have been obviously contrary to her aims for the workshop and counter to the approach and aims she had worked with all year. So strongly did she feel about what had happened during this two day workshop, Miss W. insisted that "this must be written up" and offered to help me do so because she felt that teachers should know "the burden of getting kids to write like this."

This incident more than any other in the semester, brought Miss W. into the domain of the researcher. The researcher inadvertently had altered the actions of the situation in such a way that the teacher, puzzled by what she experienced in her class, was forced to explore, and subject her disquiet to a concerted reflection and thus articulate her concerns, through a dialogue with the researcher and also with the Reading Aide, whose perceptions she also sought.

For me, as researcher, this incident taught me not only much about the classroom in which I was involved, but much also about my own teaching style, and about the methodology of ethnographic research and the intricacies of building and sustaining a constructive relationship with the teacher with whom one works.

III. CONCLUSION

The experience of working closely in one classroom has documented a number of issues that ethnographic research in education inevitably must address. The following list summarizes the issues as they emerged in the evolving relationship described above.

(1) Access or entry into the school or classroom. How is this handled? How much does the teacher need to know of the research perspective? How does the researcher present her interests - her "problem domain?"

(2) Establishing confidence. This may include issues of dealing with information, with data gathered by field notes or video or audio-tape, and ways of offering such information to the participants (in this case to the teacher involved).

(3) Becoming a working member of the classroom community. How active is the researcher's participation to be? How is the term participant-observer to be qualified? What sort of initiative is the teacher prepared to take in involving the researcher as an active member of the class? How prepared and able is the researcher to enter the daily business of the classroom?

(4) Emerging roles for teacher and researcher: and the merging of roles. The researcher may variously be listener, friend, "sounding board," reflector, catalyst, prompter of reflection, and articulation by the teacher. (Informal discussions and field notes play significant roles here.) The teacher may become more aware of her own perceptions, more conscious of the structures and interactions of her classroom, and of her own ideas and concerns, through a mutual sharing of the ways of the classroom.

(5) The presence of the researcher has affects on the process of change in the classroom. The degree to which this will be obvious or extensive depends on the nature of the relationship established by the key participants. The researcher's role in educational change or in the transformation of the

classroom is not a conventional one - it is not that of the consultant (although it may become so). Rather, I suggest, it is dependent on the extent to which she becomes part of the participant structures of the classroom community. Not only does the researcher's integration into the structuring of the classroom community have a potential impact on the use of time and space, on the grouping of children, and the organization of activities, but it also affects the relationships which previously obtained between the participants in the classroom.

(6) The presence of a "stranger and friend." If that is how the relationship develops, the presence can provide the teacher with some way of sharing the burden of teaching and of thinking about what goes on in the class. Note here that the excitement (born of anxiety and frustration) felt by Miss W. after the writing workshop, provoked her to talk more positively about her ability to help the children in her class. While I cannot claim a direct responsibility for her decision to continue teaching, it is possible to suggest that the presence of a researcher who by altering the actions of the class revealed something of what the teacher both knew and didn't know about her teaching, helped rekindle the teacher's involvement in the dynamics of her classroom situation. In some incalculable way the researcher's presence was both an agent of change and an influence on the teacher's attitude and perception of herself in her role as teacher.

I have emphasized the issue of negotiating the terms of the relationship perhaps via the mediating influence of field notes, or information offered back to the teacher or information offered by the teacher in conversation with the researcher; or via the teacher's use of the researcher as another resource in the classroom routine; or via the teacher's perception of the researcher's ability to understand the workings of the classroom and to understand the children and via the researcher's preparedness to wait for the teacher to indicate a role for her in the classroom as a community.

Central to the negotiating of roles for teacher and researcher (but more obviously for the researcher who initially has only the role of stranger and observer from the world outside) is the impact of the researcher's presence on the interactions of the classroom as a community. I have stressed in these terms the "agency" of the researcher within the participant structures already established and understood by the members of the class. The agency of the researcher is, I suggest, a subtle factor in the transformation or educational change process. The researcher does well to be aware of the potential impact of this "agent of change" role - not articulated in overt terms or demonstrated by obvious consultative actions and words, but rather developed in the process of the negotiation of her presence within the ways of operating understood by the children and teacher. In negotiating the relationships and roles for the participants of whom the researcher, by virtue even of her presence now becomes one to some degree, a catalyst for educational change may be willy-nilly found.

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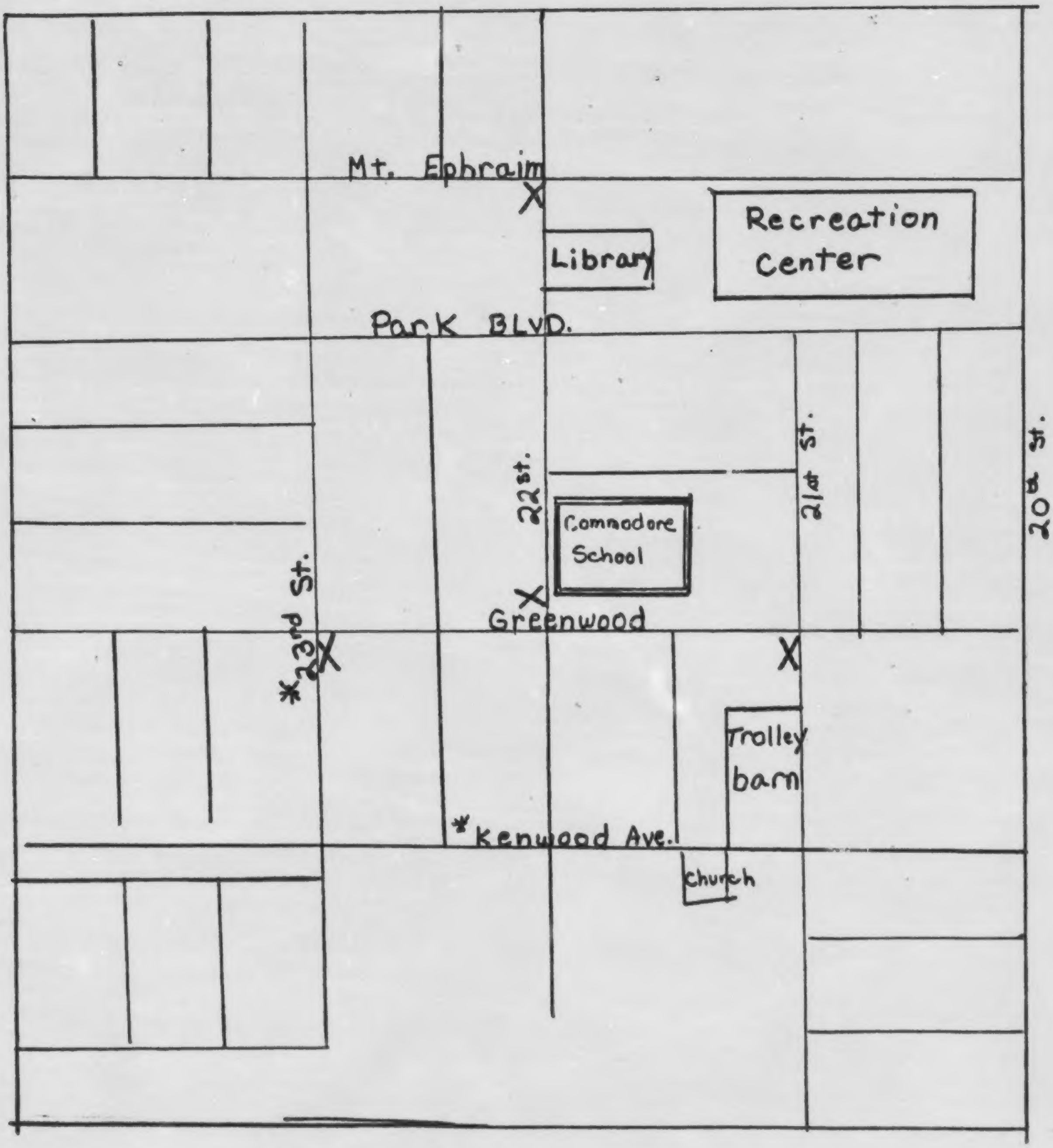
UNOFFICIAL WRITING

Sue Fiering

Commodore School Area


Mt. Ephraim
X
Library
Recreation Center
Park BLVD.
22st.
21st St.
20th St.
23rd St.
Commodore School
X
Greenwood
*
X
X
Trolley barn
*Kenwood Ave.
Church

X = Corner grocery store

* : Main business street

PAGE

I. Introduction
    A. The Concept of Literacy 1
    B. Starting Point of the Study 1
    C. Background to the Study: The School 3
    D. Background to the Study: The Community 5
    E. Outline of the Findings 7

II. Specific Framework of the Study 8
    A. The Contrasts 8
    B. Justification for the Contrasts 11
    C. The Focus 12
    D. Date Collection 14

III. Unofficial Writing 15
    A. Overview
    B. Analysis of Artifacts: Features of Print 15
        1. Space and Design 16
        2. Letters 21
        3. Handwriting Styles 23
        4. Use of Blank Space 24
        5. Physical Aspects of Writing 25
        6. Fluidity of Markings 26
    C. Analysis of Artifacts: Genres of Children's Unofficial Writing 29
        1. Notes and Messages 30
        2. Gifts of Writing 30
        3. Announcements, Signs, Chalkboard Writing 32
        4. Document Writing 33
        5. Lists, Charts, Tables 35
        6. Writing Displays 37
    D. The Functions and Meanings of Children's Unofficial Writing 38
        1. Notes and Messages 39
        2. Gifts of Writing 42
        3. Announcements, Signs, Writing on the Chalkboard 43
        4. Document Writing 44
        5. Lists, Charts, Tables 45
        6. Displays 46
        7. Summary Analysis 47
IV. Participant Structures and Style of Verbal Interaction 53
V. Literacy Environments in the Community 61
    A. The Three Facets of the Literacy Environment 61
    B. Churches and Sunday Schools 63
    C. The Homes 68
    D. The Neighborhood 70
    E. Suggestions for Classroom Applications 71

VI. Applications 77
    A. Teacher Interviews 77
    B. Types of Writing: The First "What If" 80
    C. Interaction Structures for Literacy: The Second "What If" 84
        1. The Bulletin Board 84
        2. Collaborative Reading 85
        3. Collaborative Writing 85
    D. Ideas from Teachers 89
    E. Summary and Suggestions 90

VII. Summary 93

Appendices:

A. The Meaning of Literacy 96
B. Official Literacy in the Classroom 103
C. Literacy as a Force 123
D. Data Collection 128
E. Types of Unofficial Writing Observed 133
F. Work Samples 135
G. Data on Unofficial Writing from Other Schools
H. The Ethnographer as a Role Model for Writing 143
I. Other Official Literacy Environments 146
J. Teacher Interviews 149

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Concept of Literacy

Popular assumptions about literacy are prone to three basic fallacies: first, that literacy is a clearly defined phenomenon whose definition is agreed upon both historically and cross-culturally; second, that literacy is a tool destined to be used in a specific fashion, the use being essentially equivalent from one situation to the next; third, that literacy creates specific consequences which result inevitably from the nature of the literate process itself.

These assumptions are a result of cultural nearsightedness. The functions, values and consequences associated with our own use of reading and writing gradually are assimilated into the meaning of the terms. Literacy thus is defined as reading and writing in a certain manner, for certain purposes, with certain consequences, and it becomes difficult to imagine other possibilities. This nearsightedness is important in education. When we consciously try to transmit the technology of literacy, especially cross-culturally, we often forget we are transmitting not only a set of skills, but also definite attitudes and expectations about their use.

Within the past decade, anthropologists and educators have attempted to reframe the concept of literacy by holding our cultural definitions up to the light of historical and comparative evidence. On a theoretical level, understanding of the plurality of literacies will help to separate what, if anything, is truly inherent to the literacy process (literacy "universals" perhaps). On a social level it will enable us to determine more realistically the literacy needs and goals of different cultures, and on a developmental level it will help us to see children not as deficient or subliterate adults, but as individuals who interact with literacy on their own terms and according to their own needs.

B. Starting Point of the Study

The study to be presented is one segment of an investigation into the language and literacy of children in a group of neighboring urban schools and communities. The investigation began with concerns and problems articulated by the teachers. Researchers gradually focused on individual topics. Emphasis was placed on ethnographic fieldwork and observation of children in a continuum of environments ranging from classroom to home. Observations and tentative findings were shared with teachers, who in turn provided valuable insights and criticisms. The research was intended to be grounded in practice so that findings might eventually be brought back to the classroom in an interplay of suggestions and revisions. Supportive principals and cooperative teachers made this type of observation and dialogue possible.

A direct focus on literacy became immediately likely for four reasons. First, teachers perceived the teaching of reading and writing as the most important aspects of their jobs, and the principal of the school in which I observed was intensely involved in the implementation of a reading and writing philosophy and program new to the school. Second, reading and writing were perceived as major problems in the school. Third, reading scores were the major means of categorizing children, and fourth, schools were under pressure from the public to demonstrate academic success in the basic skills areas, which included reading and writing (along with math). Thus, even the most preliminary observation of the school, the perceptions of teachers and principals, the curricular and testing emphases and the concerns of parents and community, made literacy a particularly apt starting point for an investigation of this nature. The choice was also justified on a more theoretical level. Anthropologists and educators (Szwed, Basso, Goody, Philips, Heath) have recently stressed a need for ethnographies of literacy, attempts to observe in detail the use of reading and writing as a cultural phenomenon, neither frozen nor fixed, but shaped to the demands and values of specific groups and cultures. (See discussion in Appendix A.) This study then, should be viewed as one link in a chain of ethnographies of reading and writing that have begun and hopefully will continue.

The literacy of importance in the school can be better understood if it can be seen in the context of all that literacy is and means in the lives of the children. Because of this, the study to be presented was done with the following considerations in mind:

(1) Literacy is defined according to its most minimal, yet most inclusive criterion: use of the written word. Definitions in terms of levels of proficiency, schooling, material read, etc. are relative to the perceived demands and needs of particular practices and purposes.

(2) The nature of literacy in a group will vary along at least some of the following dimensions:
- (a) means and materials available
- (b) uses to which literacy is put, and their functions
- (c) the structures of participation and interaction in which use occurs
- (d) conceptions, values, attitudes as to literacy

(3) Literacy instruction on the one hand, and the actual abilities of children on the other, will be shaped by the dimensions mentioned above.

(4) Use of literacy will be determined both by the inherent potentialities and limitations of reading and writing and by the cultural value placed on it in relation to other forms of communication that the written mode replaces or supplements. (See Appendix A for Philips' discussion).

(5) The nature of literacy can only be studied by direct observation and inquiry in the group involved. Literacy must be studied in all situations: school, neighborhood, community, etc. More specifically, literacy use by children must be studied by direct observation of those children in a variety of contexts. This implies, then, that a study of children's literacy practices cannot be extrapolated from observation of adults, even adults of the same subculture, and cannot be assumed only from observation of literacy use under adult supervision, i.e., during instruction in the classroom.

C. Background to the Study: The School

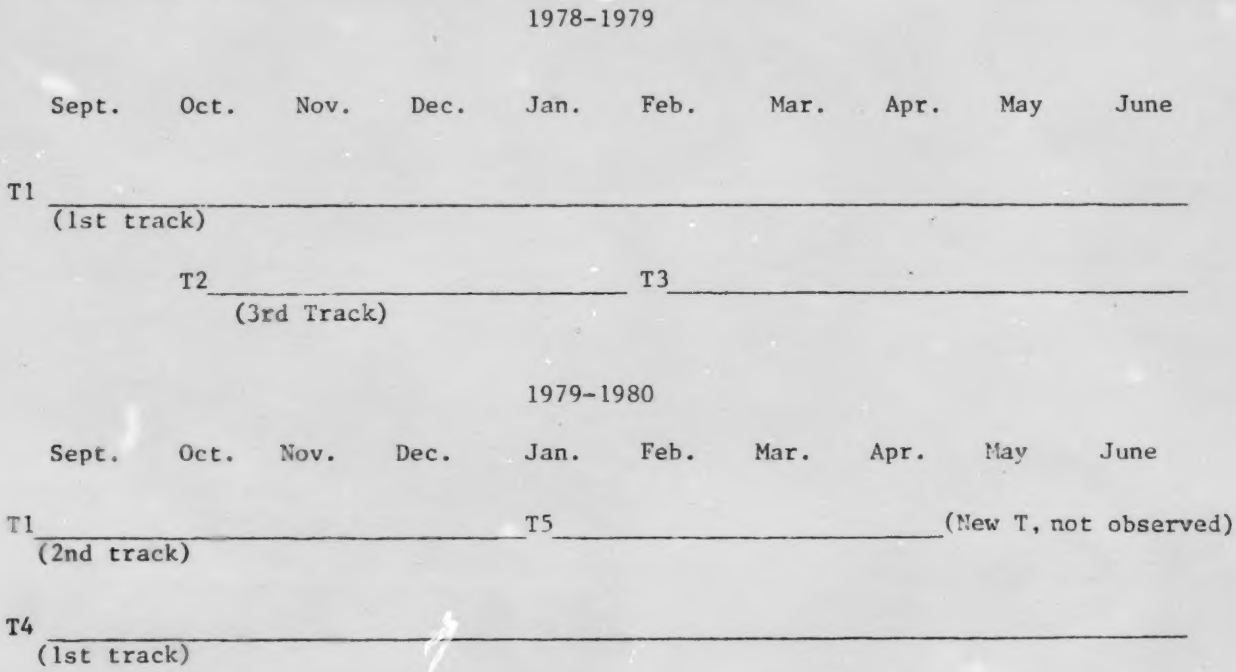
Three schools chosen as research sites are all located in Black urban neighborhoods in a large mid-Atlantic city. The site of this particular study, Commodore School (a fictitious name), is the largest of the three (almost 1,000 children), in an area of dense population and is second in terms of percent of Title I eligible children (approximately 60%).

The school is fairly traditional, with self-contained classrooms and an emphasis on discipline and structure. The principal suggested that the community itself is traditional in its education values, for example, expecting homework to be assigned and a high level of discipline to be maintained, and opposing open education and any radical innovations.

The student population of the school is almost 100% Black, with a handful of students of mixed Hispanic and Black origins. The ratio of Black to White teachers is approximately 50/50. Due to the voluntary desegregation plan which began to be implemented by the School District in 1978, the school lost a number of its experienced teachers at the beginning of the 1978 term. The teacher transfers were entirely out of the hands of either teachers or principals and caused some trauma. The principal felt that he had lost some of his most valuable personnel, and teachers were resentful at being so unexpectedly moved to other schools. In February 1979, many of the teachers were returned to their original schools, but some bitterness remained.

As measured by scores on the California Achievement Test (CAT) (an important measure in this urban area where the scores of all the city public schools are published in the city papers each year), the school is fairly successful, having received a 49th percentile score during the 1977-78 school year and breaking the 50th percentile for the 1978-79 and 1979-80 school years.

Observation was done in two fifth-grade classes during both school years. Approximately one to two days per week were spent in the classroom (one-half to one day each week per classroom). Because of teacher transfers, leaves of absence, etc., at least five different teachers were observed for varying periods. The chart below details time periods of observation for each teacher and the class observed:



(Tracks refer to the school's system of grouping children according to reading levels. There were three to four tracks at each grade level, and teachers rotated tracks at the end of each year. Thus, a teacher who had 1st track (high track) one year would have second track the next.

Observations were intentionally staggered to include morning and afternoon sessions on various days of the week. Lessons observed included formal reading groups, math lessons, language arts, social studies, creative writing periods, recess and lunch periods, assemblies, play rehearsals...just about every conceivable classroom scene.

In addition to the regularly scheduled observations, single day observations were done in a second-grade classroom and in several of the specialist teachers' rooms (science and music). Interviews were done with teachers at all grade levels (1-6) and with the principal, two reading specialists, a math specialist, the parent trainer and the home-school coordinator.

D. Background to the Study: The Community

The community surrounding Commodore School consists almost entirely of rowhouses and some larger duplex buildings converted into apartments. Blocks are checkerboarded; neat brick houses with tiny patches of lawn alternating with dilapidated or abandoned structures. In the 1950s the neighborhood had been predominately a white Italian and Irish Catholic area, but now is almost entirely settled by Blacks. Two blocks to the west of the school is the main business street of this area. Nearby is the public library and a large recreation center. A few blocks south is another main thoroughfare, this one somewhat less prosperous. Parents often express fear about their children going to this street because of the "winos" in the area.

On almost every corner of the neighborhood are small grocery stores and eating places. One, directly across from the school is a favorite place for children to stop and buy snack foods before and after school.

A number of churches dot the neighborhood, ranging from the large Baptist church a block from the school to the small, store-front type institutions. Perhaps at least ten or more different churches are within easy walking distance of the school. However, patterns for church attendance are quite varied. In the classrooms observed, only a handful of children in each class attend church in the immediate school area. Others go to churches in neighboring areas (perhaps ten to twenty blocks away), and many attend church in quite different parts of the city.

At least three or four Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops are active in the neighborhood, some meeting at churches and some at homes. The recreation center maintains sporadic activities during the year: tutoring sessions, math and reading clubs, sports teams, etc. Boys often participate in organized sports activities, and many of the girls belong to "drill teams", which are generally informal neighborhood groups for learning and practicing a kind of rhythmic chant called "cheers".

Families often have at least three or four children, up to as many as seven or eight or more. Large families generally include infants and toddlers who are very much the center of attention, constantly being talked to, carried about and played with by the older children. This arrangement provides much stimulation for the babies and allows the other children to share in responsibilities for childcare and housework.

The neighborhood often includes members of the same extended family so that friendship groups and play groups cut across age and classroom boundaries to include cousins and other relatives. Many times the immediate household includes grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, etc. Despite the frequency of single-parent homes (estimated at 70% by the principal), the children seem to have a network of other relatives close by and available for support. Children frequently go to the homes of aunts and grandparents after school, waiting for their working parents to return home. Several children live with grandparents, an arrangement that often eases family tensions. In one instance, a parent sent her eldest son (who had been constantly getting into trouble) to live with her grandmother (the boy's great-grandmother). She felt that the great-grandmother could better handle the boy. In another instance, a grandmother reported to me that several of her grandsons were living with her by choice. Her two daughters (the boys' mothers) were busy with work and school and found it difficult to cope with the children. Grandparents provide indirect support in the raising of children as well. One mother described her daughter's relationship with a grandparent, "Aral can really talk to her grandmother and I'm grateful for that.

Sometimes when she tells me things I get upset, but my mother just knows how to handle it. She's more used to bringing up kids." Thus, in all cases observed, the extended family provide networks of support for the children and often was a safety-valve for the crises inherent in family life.

The neighborhood, which could likely be characterized as an urban ghetto, has the positive as well as negative qualities of a ghetto. Congested, sometimes dirty and dilapidated, relatively poor, it is also full of activity and provides strong ties of family and friends for most of the children. Seeing the neighborhood at close hand, one would hesitate to apply the terms "deprived" or "disadvantaged" to a lifestyle that provides such constant interaction and stimulation and so many ties of kinship and friendship.

Community observation followed a variety of different formats. During the first year of the study, six children were chosen to be observed outside school in situations such as weekend trips, walks around the neighborhood, Scout troop meetings, etc. In the course of setting up and carrying out these observations, friendships were established with several of the families and the researcher was able to visit homes more informally, even dropping in unannounced from time to time for a cup of coffee. During the second year, contact was continued with these children and their parents while more general observations were done of activities involving many children, such as Sunday Schools, Scout troops, etc. In this way certain children, families, and community activities were observed in depth. During the second year interviews were done with a second set of parents. These interviews focused on specific questions raised by the research.

E. Outline of the Findings

Discussion of the study will proceed according to the following broad topics:

Specific Framework of the Study
Unofficial Writing
Participant/Interaction Structures and Literacy
The Literacy Environment in the Community
Applications

Several findings will be stated now and elaborated on later:

1. In the schools, the dominant "official" conception of reading and writing involves certain kinds of materials used for certain purposes and in a quite specific manner. Involvement with the written word that

does not fit these cultural requirements does not "count" as literacy.

2. From the observer's viewpoint, literacy (of a certain kind) is widespread in the school and community, but because it is often "unofficial", that is, does not meet the preconceived criteria, it is not recognized and counted as literacy.
3. Observation of this "unofficial" literacy can give insight about children's understanding of, use of, and interaction with literacy, and changes that occur with schooling and development. Information of this sort may be valuable for shaping educational practices and curricula to meet children's needs.
4. Even children who lack the technological skills of literacy practice demonstrate ideological proficiency with literacy, i.e., an understanding of how reading and writing can serve them. Even the "illiterates" manage to use literacy for certain purposes. Literacy should be understood as a powerful "force" in children's lives, not an abstract and alien imposition.
5. Similarity of literacy use does not imply similarity of function. In other words, although children often appear to use literacy in ways identical to adult use, the underlying functions may differ.
6. The home and community often provide a rich literacy environment that is not recognized or capitalized on by the school.

II. SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

A. The Contrasts

Ethnographic studies of reading and writing in this country have either concentrated on the school alone or have taken the home and community into account in terms of a dichotomy between them and the school. Within the school, studies have included detailed analyses of reading groups (McDermott and Gospodinoff, 1976), writing behavior (Graves, 1979) and general lessons (Mehan, 1979). Such studies have revealed underlying assumptions and patterns in teacher-student interaction and the delicate balance maintained in such interactions. A second group of researchers have called for ethnographies of community literacy practice (Szwed, in press; Basso, 1974) and have compared school and community literacy ideals and uses (Heath, 1980). The basic assumption in this latter approach is that literacy in the home/community may differ significantly from literacy at school.

I share the concern of those who call for ethnographies of community literacy practice but suggest a different contrast for analysis. What is taken as fundamental is not the setting (school vs. home or community), but the participant/interaction structures in which literacy occurs. Thus, we can speak of directed literacy which is initiated, guided, motivated and controlled by an adult, not only in topic, but in style of interaction as well; and spontaneous literacy which is initiated by the child for his own purposes and in his own style of interaction. This contrast cuts across the more common community/school framework since directed literacy occurs both in the school and in the home and community (in such settings as Bible classes, scout troops, etc.), and spontaneous literacy occurs not only in the community, but in school as well, often when children are not involved in the official interaction.

Thus:

School

Spontaneous	Directed
passing notes	reading group
reading comics	writing assignments
making address books	workbooks
reading posters, stickers, signs	worksheets

Community

Spontaneous	Directed
letters to relatives	Sunday School lessons
messages for parents	tutoring sessions
reading cereal boxes, newspapers, ads	Scout troop assignments
playing school	homework

The same activity could occur in either kind of context, directed or spontaneous. For example, the teacher might assign children to write letters to their parents and the child might spontaneously write such a letter. However, certain types of literacy would be characteristic of one context or the other. The reading of cereal boxes and the writing of address books would most likely be spontaneous activities, while the filling-in of worksheets and writing of book reports would more often be directed by the teacher.

The initial focus and framework of this study is on spontaneous literacy. Perhaps I felt a perverse delight in focusing on what had so traditionally been out of focus for teachers, educational theorists and researchers. While the rest of the world watched the lesson, I watched the kid in the back of the room who was busily scrawling a note and passing it with elaborate secrecy to the child sitting two feet away from him. What had at first been humorous and charming, but background, observation of literacy use soon became the foreground of my observations. There is a very simple justification for this focus: to learn about the meaning of literacy to children, we must watch how children use reading and writing, not only how teachers instruct them in literacy use. In a sense I have focused on literacy acquisition, not literacy teaching or formal learning.

A second contrast cross-cuts the first. Of the mass of literacy incidents occurring in school, home and community, only a portion were "counted" as literacy. I was left with the impression of an implicit distinction between the great tradition ("WRITING/READING")--those things labeled as high level cognitive and expressive activities--and the little tradition ("writing/reading")--those highly functional bits and pieces of literacy engaged in by all people, but not really counted for schooling. The two contrasts concern different dimensions of literacy activities. The contrast between "directed" and "spontaneous" is based on the organization or structure of interaction; the contrast between capitalized and uncapitalized WRITING/READING: writing/reading is based on the kind of thing that is written or read. The dimensions are independent. There are instances of WRITING that are directed and instances that are spontaneous, and the same is true for "writing". Conversely, some of the spontaneous activity of the children involved things that count as WRITING/READING and some that do not. Together, the two dimensions or contrasts appear to capture all the kinds of literacy incidents that occur:

	Directed	Spontaneous
WRITING/READING	reading groups "creative writing book reports library book reading	library books writing stories, poems writing in journals extra credit reports
writing/reading	workbook pages fill in the blanks punishment sentences phonics exercises	passing notes calendars, address books copying from books reading poster, signs, ads

The four kinds of incidents are not equally salient of course. Three are in focus in the classroom at least to some degree. Things which count as both "directed" and "WRITING" for example, appear to be most salient to teachers. Things which share one or the other of those features receive some attention. Things which share neither feature, which are both spontaneous and not referrable to the officially valued uses of literacy are almost totally out of focus.

These differences can be shown by marking in the two features which are of most concern (to the school) with a+, and the other two features which a-. (The + and - symbols are graphic representations not only of the presence or absence of certain features but of the degree of focusing of teacher attention as well).

directed WRITING + +
directed writing + -
spontaneous WRITING - +
spontaneous writing - -

The items in category 1 (directed WRITING) (or analogously directed READING) could be labeled as "official" while those in category 4 (spontaneous writing) (or spontaneous reading) could be called "unofficial". It is category 4 alone that is almost totally out of focus in the classroom. Thus, a whole series of writing (and reading) events that have meaning for the children (as evidenced very simply by their engagement with these forms of literacy) has been overlooked, both in teaching efforts and in research. It is these incidents in particular that form the focus of this research.

B. Justification for the Contrasts

The contrasts spontaneous/directed and WRITING/writing, READING/reading arose from the interaction of two distinct observational experiences: the first was that the children frequently engaged in bits of writing (note passing, making charts, putting signs and labels on things, etc.) and reading (comics, songs, notes, etc.) that were noticeable for their charm, humor and originality (and often paradoxically by virtue of their attempts to be clandestine.) The second was that in discussions with teachers, the teachers consistently overlooked these incidents and spoke only of reading and writing done as part of recognized classroom activities, or reading and writing of certain types of material for specific purposes, i.e., reading books for enjoyment, writing book reports and stories, etc. When pressed for other incidents of spontaneous literacy, teachers sometimes denied that any other reading and writing occurred. It was not the case, however, that the "unofficial" literacy went totally unnoticed in the classrooms. As soon as I mentioned incidents such as "passing notes", "writing captions on pictures", "making signs", teachers expressed instant recognition of these events, but there was a more or less unspoken consensus that these were not really what "counted" as literacy in the school. Several teachers expressed the distinction quite clearly, "Well, I don't really consider that writing," "the low track children do nothing that I would consider writing."

This distinction was maintained by parents as well. When questioned about the reading and writing habits of their children, parents immediately discussed the "great" tradition of literacy: "Gerry doesn't read very much. About all he reads are some kinds of books by Tom Corbett or something like that. They're silly books with no moral or anything." "The children sometimes read the encycleopedia especially when they've heard something new and want to look it up." "My daughter reads lots of library books, especially all the Judy Blume books." "Jemi wrote a poem to her aunt and was going to mail it to her."

As with teachers, it was generally only when parents were specifically asked about "unofficial" literacy that they confirmed that children did read TV guides, cereal boxes, recipes and wrote signs, address books, lists of the latest records, etc. Often these items were mentioned with a laugh or a shrug, an almost literal attempt to "shrug them off". They were clearly not of central importance in conceptions of reading and writing.

Thus, it was not the case that the school and home conceptions of reading and writing differed markedly. On the contrary, parents were remarkably similar to teachers in their conceptions of the meaning of literacy, and both groups were consistent in their definition of what can be termed the "great" tradition of literacy.

C. The Focus

"Unofficial" literacy is of interest because it is a manifestation of children's understanding both of the various features of print and of the potential uses of the written word. The child is not identical to the adult in his uses of literacy, and the contention of this paper is that just as children must learn the basic psychological process involved in reading, so too must they learn the proper societal contexts, meanings and uses for literacy. Unlike the psychological processes which have at least some universal form--e.g., visual perception, auditory discrimination--the societal structures for literacy have varied and continue to vary both historically and cross-culturally. The child must figure out (much as he does with speech) not only how to read and write, but when, where, why and in what interaction settings to read and write. And it cannot be assumed that the child's understanding of the literacy process remains constant throughout his development. Reading for the five-year old clearly has quite different structures and purposes than reading for the fifteen and 25-year old.

The importance of beginning to approach literacy from the viewpoint of the child becomes apparent when one compares this perspective to the conceptions of literacy and literacy use advocated by educators and curricula. (For a detailed discussion of "official" literacy see Appendix B). In brief, while our society mostly considers reading and writing to be silent and solitary activities with motivations that are often intensely private and personal, children often turn literacy events into collaborative, oral and highly social-interactive phenomena The motivations for literacy behaviors are often not only unanticipated by educational theory, but can be somewhat contradictory to the viewpoints of educators.

The following section of the paper is an analysis of spontaneously occurring instances of writing, especially "unofficial" writing, those incidents not counted as writing by the teachers in their assessment of students' capabilities. Writing was chosen (instead of reading) as the major focus of this section of the study for a very practical reason connected with the constraints of observation, Writing leave a trace that often remains long after the written event has occurred and can be observed and recorded. Reading leaves no such trace. If the actual reading event is not observed, it is lost to the data. Thus the observations of spontaneous writing and the opportunities for analysis simply outstripped those of spontaneous reading, and the most feasible solution is to hold the discussion of unofficial reading in abeyance. However, the sections on Literacy and Interaction

Structures and on Applications will include evidence from observation of spontaneous reading behavior in the classroom.

The study is in many respects an illustration of the strengths of an ethnographic approach. Experimental designs, quantitative analyses, precoded observation schedules can hardly be expected to reveal phenomena that go unrecognized in the classroom or in the theoretical literature. (It is impossible to measure, code or manipulate features that are not already identified). The existence of "unofficial literacy" could hardly have been discovered by experiments predesigned by researchers or even teachers. Until the phenomenon became apparent to an observer, it, in some senses, did not exist.

D. Data Collection

Examples of unofficial writing were collected in the course of fieldwork observations in the school and community. Once the focus on unofficial writing had been established, it became relatively easy to spot examples of writing engaged in spontaneously. If possible, notes were made on the spot and frequently the artifact was copied by the observer or requested from the child. I was concerned about the possibility of children beginning to engage in incidents of unofficial writing specifically for my benefit. While this did occur in a few cases, in most instances the amount and type of writing did not seem to be altered by my presence, and most of the examples were observed incidentally and not conspicuously displayed or brought to my attention. The general impression I had was that, despite my interest in writing, the children continued much in their normal pattern of writing use.

My own observations were supplemented by a group of artifacts collected by Ave Davis, a researcher in another school in the area. (See Appendix G.) These artifacts indicate that this type of unofficial writing extends beyond the bounds of a single classroom or even a single school.

Data collection was somewhat skewed in the following manner: more incidents of unofficial writing within school than without. In school, when children were relatively confined and surrounded by objects of literacy, it was easy to observe instances of unofficial writing. Outside of school, playing on the streets, going on trips, visiting with the ethnographer in their homes, the opportunity to observe spontaneous writing was much decreased. Obviously, this posed a methodological problem. However, when I was able to catch incidents of unofficial writing in the community, I found that they paralleled those in the classroom both in form and seeming purpose. Thus, I felt that the validity of the findings was not unduly distorted by the imbalance in numbers.

The term artifact is used deliberately in connection with bits of writing done by the children, first to suggest the at least semi-permanent nature of these objects and the fact that they continued to exist after their initial creation; second, to suggest the use of these objects as "tools" of sorts, often designed to accomplish specific purposes; and third, to reinforce the basic anthropological nature of this aspect of the work--the attempt to understand a "culture" through its creations.

III. UNOFFICIAL WRITING

A. Overview

In the sections that follow, unofficial writing will be considered first in terms of an analysis of the artifacts and second in terms of the functions and meaning of the writing for the children. Appendix D contains a description of how the data were collected and a detailed discussion of the criteria used in counting incidents of unofficial writing. Appendix E contains a rough breakdown of the numbers and kinds of incidents observed. While the number of writing incidents included in the data (182) was intended only to provide a cross-section of the kinds of spontaneous writing that occurred in the classroom, two very approximate quantitative observations and impressions should be mentioned. First, once I began to observe spontaneous writing, it became impossible to enter a classroom without catching a glimpse of at least a few (3-4) new artifacts or incidents, this despite the relatively full schedules of many of the classrooms. Inevitably, it would seem that children found time during the cracks and seams of the day to write for their own uses and purposes. Second, spontaneous writing was more prevalent in the high track than the low track classes (approximately a two to one ratio), but the type of writing in each were quite similar.

B. Analysis of Artifacts: Features of Print

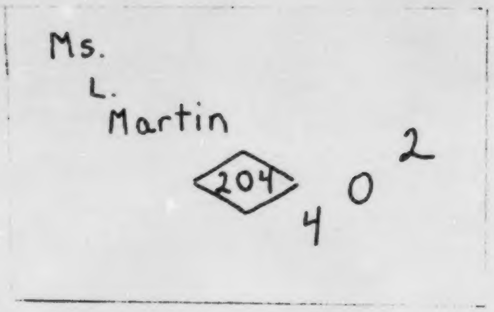
The salient feature of most unofficial writing observed in the classroom was that it exploited certain potentialities of writing not usually emphasized in "official" writing. These potentialities have to do with opportunities for stylistic expression intrinsic to the graphic medium. In speech, as we know, information can be transmitted not only by choice of words and grammatical structures, but also by intonation, pauses, rhythm, modification of ordinary vowels and consonants. So too in writing. Information can be transmitted not only by choice of words and grammatical structures, but also by the physical arrangement on the page, the style of handwriting, the juxtaposition of unlike elements in an ironic way, etc.

The use of such features of writing is not taught to children (no more than is the use of expressive features of speech); they learn it as a result of their exposure to a variety of uses of print, many of which are overlooked by the school.

(1) Space and Design: As beginning writers, children struggle to master the spatial conventions of writing: linear, horizontal, left to right placement, spacing between words, etc. Donald Graves (1979) has documented how young children inadvertently break these spatial conventions, running words together, writing at odd angles, etc.

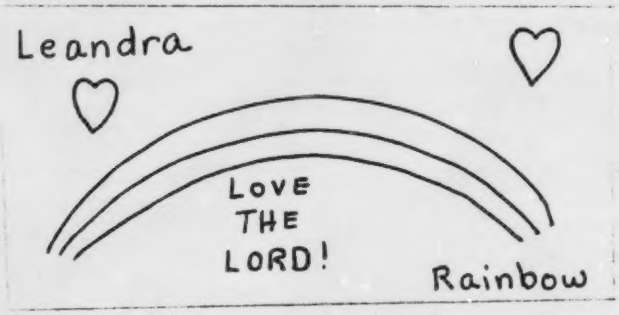
"Words can go up, down or across for beginning writers like Toni. Toni has been writing for two weeks and does not know yet that written words, unlike spoken words, must conform to space, have a set direction and have specific beginnings and endings ."

By fifth grade the spatial conventions have long been mastered and children begin to intentionally break rules (or perhaps apply new rules) with a verve and a sense of design akin to the graphic artist or advertiser. For example, in their writing children often leave the horizontal and begin to place words and letters in vertical, diagonal and even right to left arrangements;

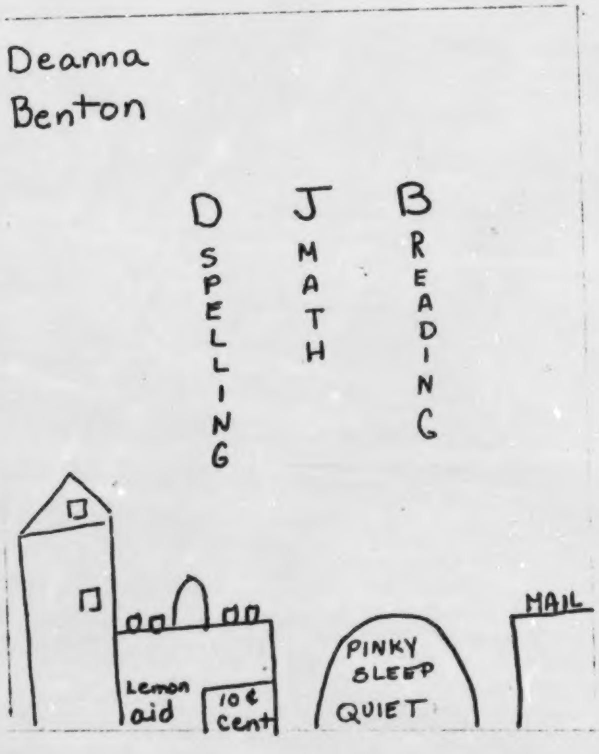

Ms.
L.
Martin
204
4 0 2

(sign for teacher)

The message may be arranged in space to suit the design:

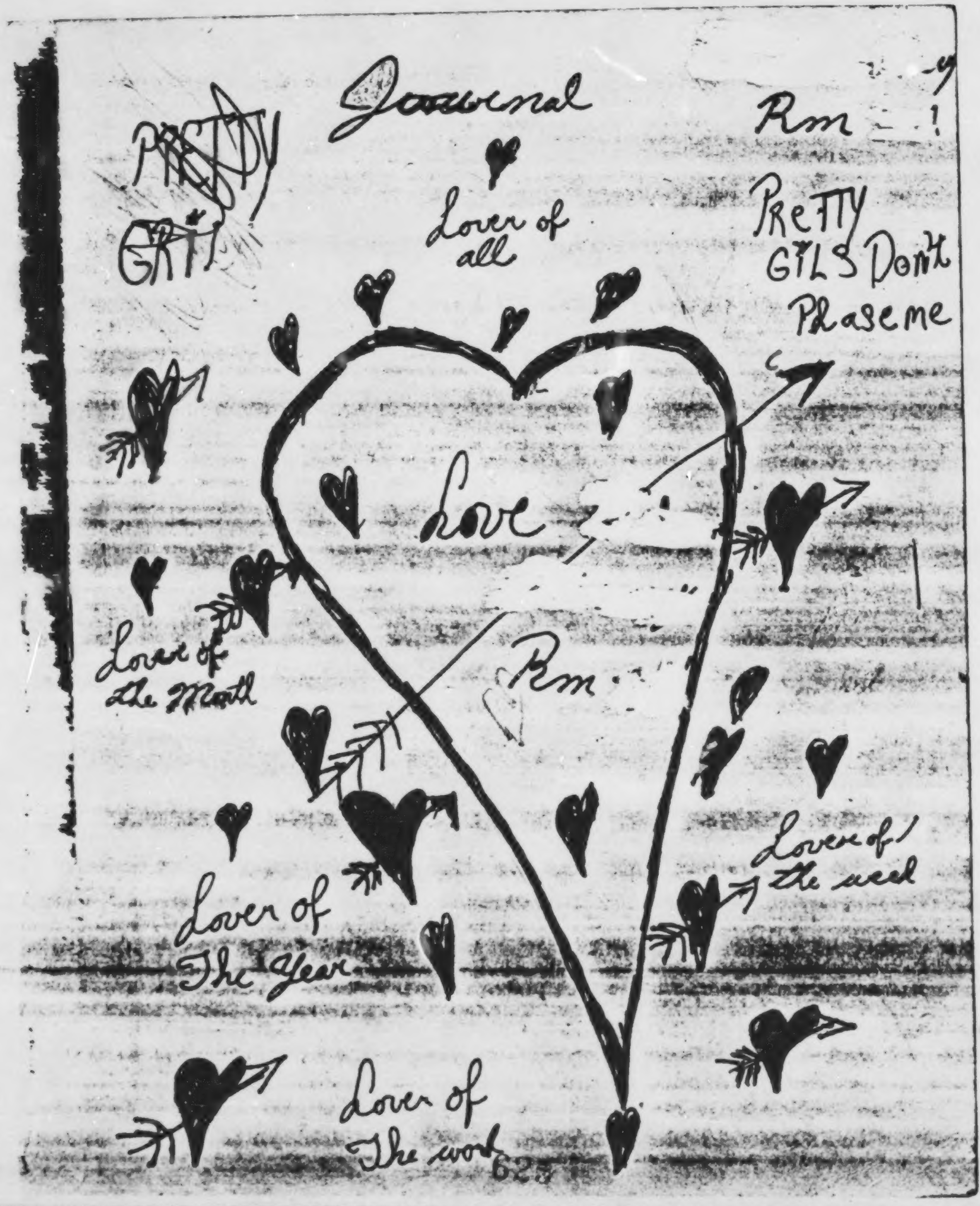

Leandra
LOVE
THE
LORD!
Rainbow

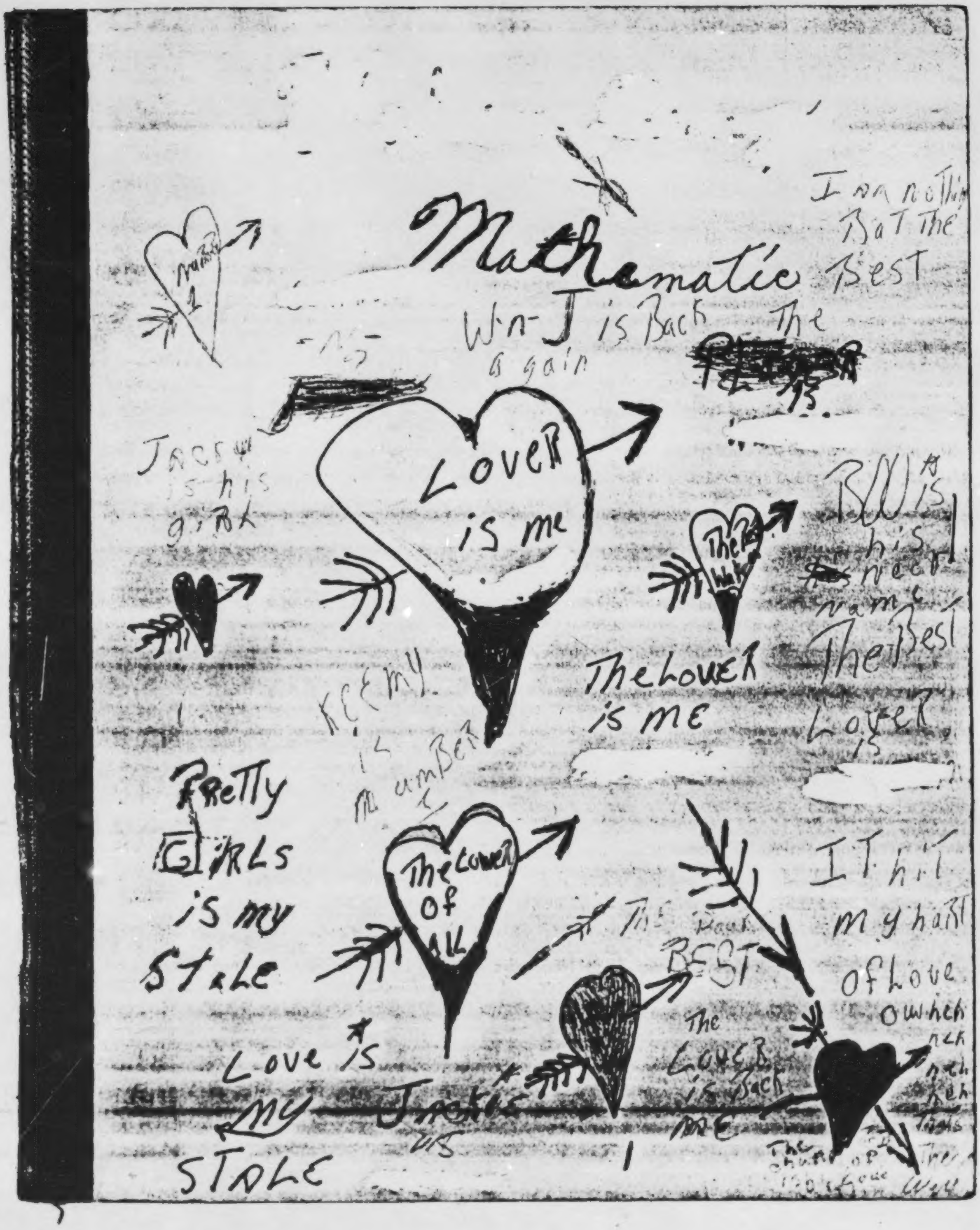
(work folder)


Deanna
Benton
D J B
SPELLING
MATH
READING
Lemon
aid
10¢
cent
PINKY
SLEEP
QUIET
MAIL

(paper holder)

In the example of Warren's book covers (below and next page), the use of space is very fluid. Writing extends around a central design and words are placed vertically and on a diagonal. The message extends all over the page and the viewer's eye is free to wander, not be pulled along in a left to right fashion.


PRETTY
GRL
Journal
Rm
Lover of
all
PReTTY
GILS Don't
Plaseme
Love
Rm
Lover of
the Month
Lover of
the week
Lover of
The Year
Lover of
The work



Mathematic

I am nothing But The Best

Win-J is Back again

The [redacted]

is

[redacted]

Jackie is his girl

Lover is me

The Lover is me

The Why

BW is his

~~his~~ neer name

The Best

The Lover is

Keemy is number 1

Pretty Girls is my stale

The Lover of All

It hit my hart of Love

Owhch

nch

neh

heh

This

The

Well

The Best

The Lover is Back me

The Shurp of

Love is my stale

Jackie VS

In children's writing games, the potentials of space are realized in ways not permitted by oral discourse. A game one little girl showed me:

Child: "Write 'look fish' on the paper." (I did so)

"Now write 'how fish' and put 'how' under 'look' and 'fish' under 'fish'."

I followed her directions and ended with two columns that looked like this:

look	fish
how	fish
many	fish
times	fish
I	fish
made	fish
this	fish
fool	fish
write	fish
fish	fish

(See Appendix F for her copy)

Obviously the child then told me to read down the left column (to her and the other children's great amusement).

The game is a play on the simultaneous horizontal and vertical potentials of writing. First you rely on the standard horizontal format to disguise the message; then the vertical format is used and the message is revealed, obviously a trick that can't be done orally (although there are verbal analogues to this trick).

Among the most common word games played by the children are "word search", a large grid filled with letters among which are embedded words on the horizontal, vertical, diagonal, left to right and right to left axes. The child searches to find the embedded words. In a similar game the child writes down a very large word like "supercalifragalistic" and then tries to find as many words as possible made from adjacent letters in either left to right or right to left order. Both games demand a break from the standard left-right, horizontal conventions of writing.

One final example of the way children can play with space came from an official composition about taking a magic carpet ride. The magic carpet was descending as the girl approached the bottom of the paper. She wrote, "...think that your going down, down, down.

OVER"

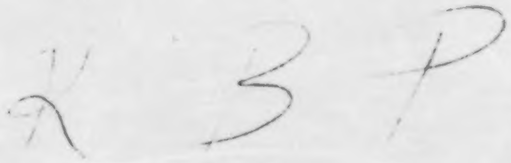
"Over" was a command to turn the page to the other side where she had written:

BOOM!!!

The child had capitalized on another potential use of space in writing, the fact that a paper has two sides and both can be written on. She played with this space to indicate a kind of suspenseful pause and an element of surprise. (This is a common trick in children's books.) The same kind of suspense and surprise could have been done orally but with different devices (pauses, slowing down of speech, loud voice).

Children can be both liberated from and constrained by space. Often in official writing, space is seen as a constraint, something to be filled in. Teachers sometimes told children to write "at least a page" or fill "at least one side of the paper" and this minimal requirement becomes a maximum as well. As they wrote, children sometimes made comments like, "I got only twelve more lines to go." In my favorite example, a girl wrote a composition about a little old man and a football game and the Dallas Cowboys... She reached the last line of the paper with no denouement and simply wrote, "All of the sudden a big snowstorm came and took everything away." (Would that novelist could solve their problems so easily.)

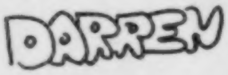
(2). Letters: By fifth grade the conventions of lettering (like the conventions of space) have been mastered by most children. A glance back at Warren's journal covers shows the almost adult ease with which he formed letters. The strokes seem to be hurried; sometimes the letter is only sketched by a line and quick curve:

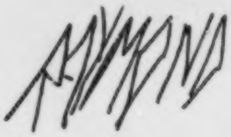


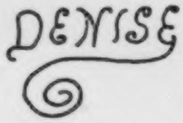
This lack of self-consciousness suggests an accomplished penman (although not necessarily a child apt to be praised for his handwriting). Clearly, Warren was more intent on getting his message down than on worrying about letter formation.

Like the conventions of space, once a child masters the basic formation for letters, first in manuscript, then cursive, he can begin to "play" with these formations. Teachers report that interest in the design aspect of lettering doesn't begin to appear to any noticeable degree until mid-to-late second grade. By fifth grade interest in letter design is full blown.

The use of "block" letters, "graffitti" style and "curlique" letters (my terms) are frequent:

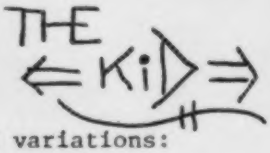




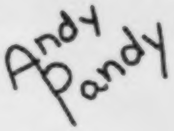


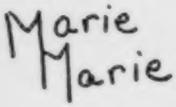
The "graffitti" style is similar to the writing seen on the walls of buildings in the neighborhood and is a case in which the graphic symbol takes precedence over the meaning. The boys referred to graffitti as "that kind of writing you can't read," and clearly the design seems to be the sign itself.

There are also more complex examples of graphic design:



and isolated variations:



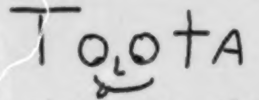


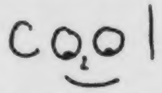
That these letter formations are not simply deviations from a norm (errors of sorts), but rather explorations of the possibilities of print, is evidenced by the fact that they don't occur until children have mastered the norm.

Along with the design aspects of writing went certain symbols. Frequently used were hearts, arrows, stars, zigzag lines like lightning, flowers, curliques, lines like rays...These appeared again and again in a wide range of writing from a large number of children.

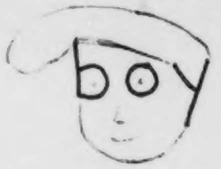
A second common aspect of children's attention to lettering was the use of letters and word form to create a picture. (This was not evident in the first and second grade classes, according to teachers.) There were two possibilities:

1. the picture was related to the letter forms -





2. the picture was related to the letter form and meaning (a kind of word game of which I have only one example -



(The child began with the word "boy" and then filled in the lines to create a picture of a boy.)

The children's interest in name writing and letter designs often became a very total kind of involvement, a way of passing time or perhaps even a means of escape.

> The teacher began a social studies lesson... While the lesson was going on, Robert was writing on a piece of paper. He did not have his book out. He was singing quietly to himself. He wrote his name on the paper in different styles, much like the graffitti on building walls and in the subway. This continued for five minutes or more.

In this example, Robert, who was a difficult child in the classroom, had been harshly scolded by the teacher in front of the class. For a tense moment it looked as if he might rebel. He capitulated but spent the next five to ten minutes singing quietly and writing his name over and over, not participating in the lesson.

(3) Handwriting Styles: Linguists have long recognized that speech, even the speech of a single community is not simply an undifferentiated whole. People distinguish varieties of speech appropriate for different situations and characteristic of different people. Analogously, there are styles of handwriting, styles of letter formation appropriate to different people and situations. (Doctors' handwriting has long been recognized and commented on humorously.) Children are attuned to the differences in handwriting styles

and even able to switch from one to another. For example, a girl finished correcting her worksheet and in large letters with a red pen she boldly wrote at the bottom:

Good Work

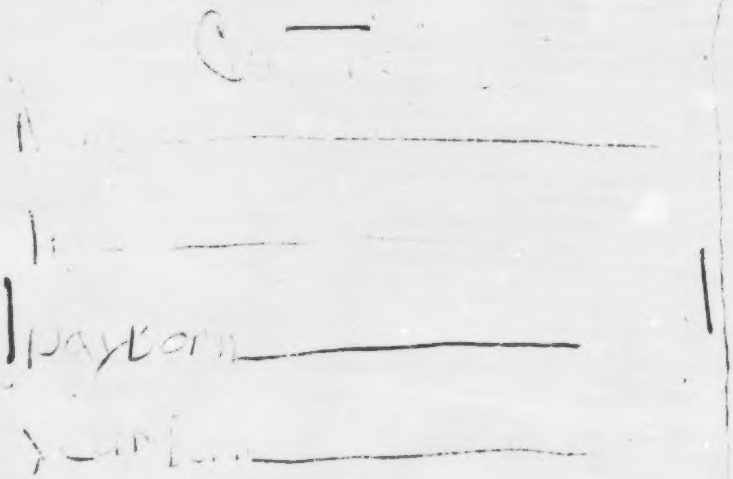
This was a clear imitation of a teacher's evaluatory phrase, and the large, flowing handwriting was a definite approximation to how teachers tend to write.

Another girl who had just completed an assigned composition wrote at the end of the page in large bold strokes:

The Very End
Story by
Lucy Anjanette Rollins

In the first case, handwriting style switching signalled the taking on of a new role (teacher). In the second, it signalled perhaps a playful finality (or a grand finale).

(4) Use of Blank Spaces: A particularly important (although deceptively simple) aspect of the use of space is the "blank". Children create official looking forms (which will be discussed later), using the blank space to indicate where information was to be placed. The simplest arrangement was an adaptation of the list:



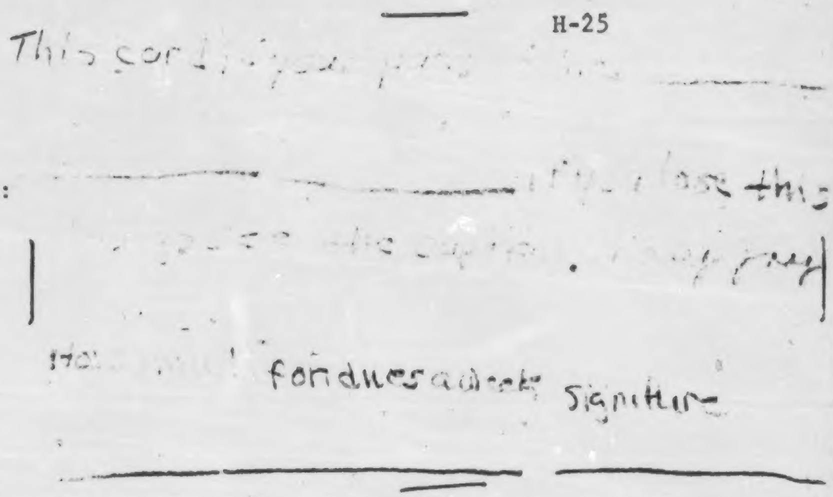
payton ______

or a checklist:

devored ☐
maried ☐
sort of ☐

("divorced, "married", "sort of" (?!))

The blanks could get more complex:



This card [illegible]

[illegible] this

[illegible]

[illegible] fondues a week signiture

These are particularly interesting for the light they shed on developmental issues. Lower grade teachers (first and second) commented that young children would begin to imitate the worksheet formats and write, "Name John Watson Grade 2 Date January 17, 1980," but did not actually go so far as to create a "form" with the potential of being filled in by someone else or at a later time, e.g., "Name________ Grade____________ Date___________". The use of the line as an indication of blank space to be used for writing may be related to the child's increasing ability to decontextualize himself from the writing situation, to realize that "Name" and "John Watson" don't necessarily always have to go together, and that what gets written beside "name" or "date" depends upon who is writing and when. Perhaps the use of the "blank" is a symbolic breakthrough from a stage of what psychologists would call "egocentrism" to a stage in which the child begins to consider the perspective of the reader.

(5) Physical Aspects of Writing

As adults we've long since mastered the physical aspect of writing: pencil grip, hand movement, control, and we forget that for children the physical actions can involve a large part of their concentration and attention. Beginning writers are immersed in the physical difficulties, but as each stage is mastered, new challenges are spontaneously sought. As early as the end of first grade a few children in the high track class have begun to try out cursive writing (something that won't be "officially" taught until grade 3).

Once both manuscript and cursive forms are mastered, children create new challenges. In the fifth grade girls pay a lot of attention to neat handwriting, slowly and laboriously forming and reforming each letter, comparing handwriting styles, slanting words the wrong way, etc.

> Keesha stood up to write on the board in the back corner. She wrote the date: 11/19/79, erased it, asked me if it was the 19th, rewrote the date very neatly and precisely, erased it, rewrote it, erased it, wrote November, and finally erased the whole thing. This was all very laboriously done.

Boys attend to perfecting their graffitti techniques, and all children begin to erect new physical challenges for themselves, for example, trying to learn to write with their left hands. When I showed a few children how I could do mirror writing, there was a sudden spurt of interest and for weeks afterwards the children would approach me to show how they had mastered the skill.

The children were particularly attuned to the physical aspect of my writing, wondering at how quickly I wrote, how I wrote without looking and once, how I held the pencil very strangely. (A second researcher, Linda May, has related similar experiences in her classrooms.) The children were commenting on adult prowess in a skill that, while almost mastered, still required certain effort and concentration for them.

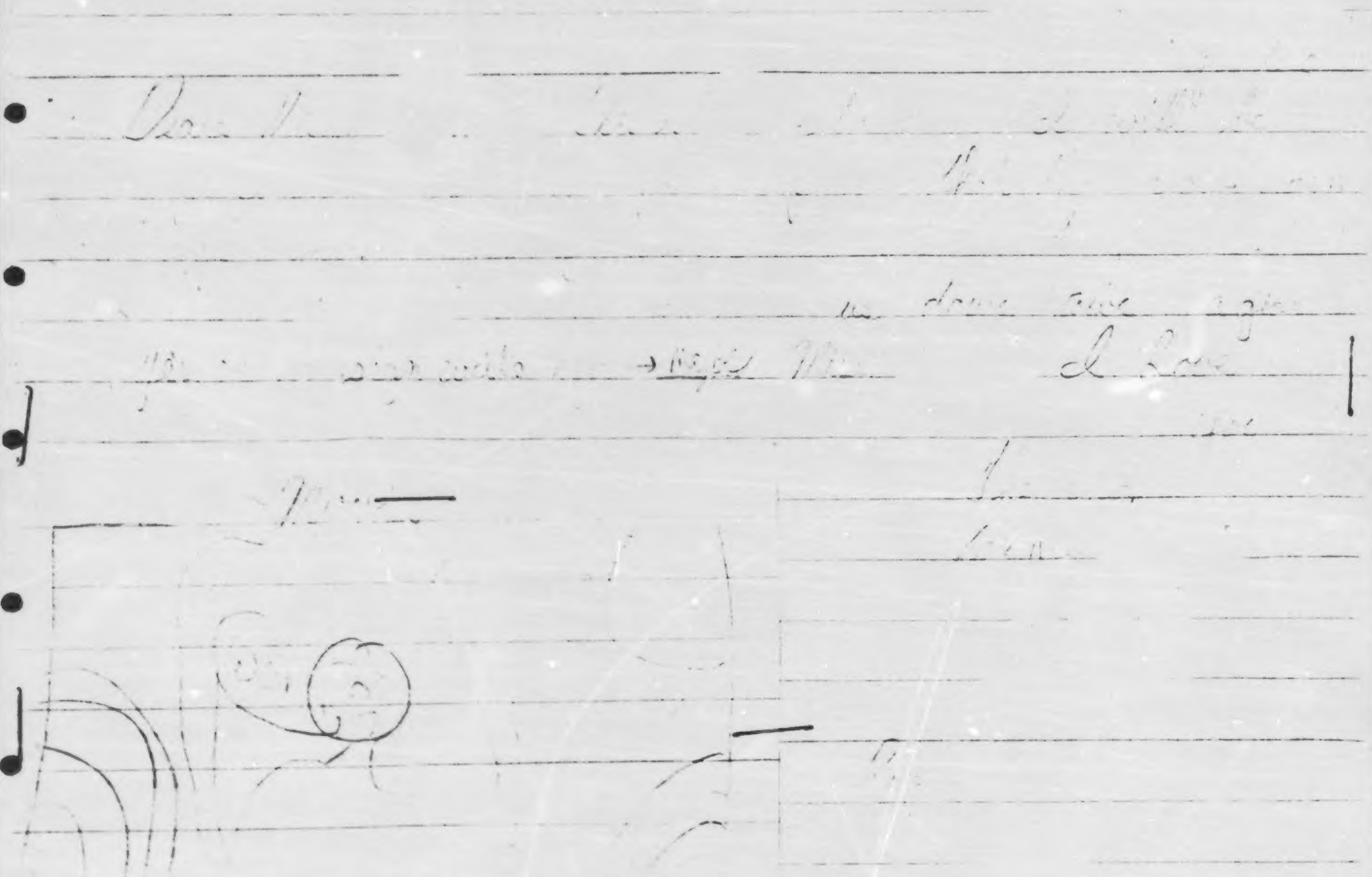
6. Fluidity of Markings: By "markings" I mean those words, phrases, symbols that distinguish one kind of writing from another. For example, letters are marked by "Dear ____", "Love", "Sincerely", etc. Stories are marked by "Once upon a time", "The End". Documents, forms, workbook sheets are marked by things like, "Sign", "Circle yes or no".

In both the official and unofficial writing of the children, the markings were particularly fluid, not yet having been stabilized into one context. Notes to the teacher and friends often contained markings imitative of specific documents.

> "Miss Martin can Sarena and I sit together if we don't talk. Say
> Yes or no Circle one."

Official compositions frequently used a variety of markings, often ending with "The End," "The end of my story", or even sometimes with "Love." In the example on the next page the child combined composition markings (the heading), letter markings ("Deare Miss"), an identification of herself (as if she were on the telephone perhaps), document markings ("Yes or no sign write here ___"), story markings ("The End"), more letter markings ("from") and finally a picture. The end result is a strange conglomeration.

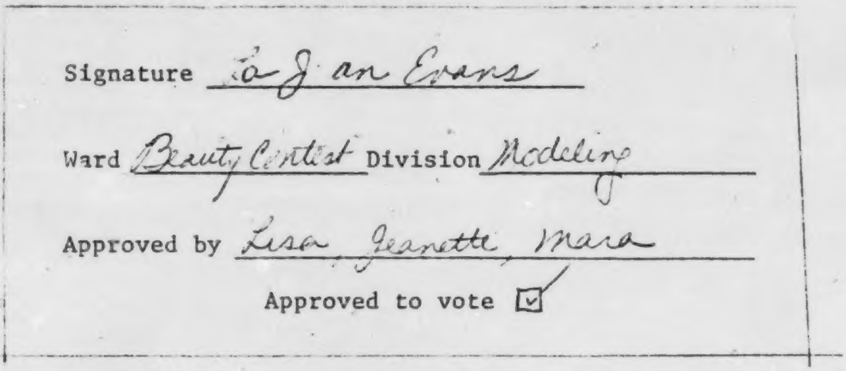
By fifth grade some, but not all, of the children had mastered the system of literacy markings that we use to identify different kinds of texts. As is the case with space and letter formation, once the markings were mastered, the child could then begin to "play" with them for humorous and whimsical effects.



For example, Kevin took notes for me in my notebook and wrote "The End" at the bottom. He laughed and said, "I ended it like a story."

Neal wrote a long (three or four page) composition. At the bottom of each page he wrote, "To be continued". At the top of the next page he wrote "Part 2 of the story". He pointed this out as a humorous addition to his work. Neal also said that he often introduces his stories with "Twentieth Century Fox Presents". He was clearly aware of special markings and used them ironically for humor.

Closely related to the children's ability to "play" with literacy markings was their ability to manipulate literacy artifacts and adapt them to their own uses. For example, a group of girls had a pad of voter registration forms and used these to register participants in their class show:



Signature [illegible] Jan Evans

Ward Beauty Contest Division Modeling

Approved by Lisa, Jeanette, Mara

Approved to vote ☑

Children's ability to adapt either standard literacy markings or already created artifacts to their own literacy needs demonstrates an understanding of the needs of the specific literacy situation (e.g., a need for an official-looking paper with blanks to serve as a registration form), a recognition of the similarity of the available document to the "ideal" documents (a voter registration form does resemble a form that would be used to register people for a show), and an ability to ignore the differences or to play with the differences for special effect (e.g., using "Twentieth Century Fox Presents" to begin a composition has an obvious humorous effect.) When, and under what conditions children come to develop this ability to transform literacy artifacts and markings, is a question for further research.

The features of print mentioned in this previous section are not taught to the children. Teachers stress the constraints of writing concerning proper spacing, letter formation and markings. Children, however, see writing in their environment (classroom and community) that transcends these constraints (advertising, posters, storybooks), and they spontaneously begin to employ the additional expressive potentialities afforded by the features of the graphic medium. The child learns he can express excitement not only by a word and an exclamation point, but by the size, darkness and spacing of letters. He can transmit a message not only through semantic and grammatical relationships between words, but by design and decoration as well. (e.g., girls surround their names with flowers and curliques, boys with lightning rays and jagged lines.) Children learn that they can break rules for humor ("Twentieth Century Fox Presents") and can adapt writing formats to their own needs (voter registration forms used for a show). They thereby demonstrate that they are immersed in a literacy environment and can no more avoid being influenced by such literacy than by the expressive features of language they hear in everyday speech.

In the next two sections (C,D) I shall try to describe the principal kinds of unofficial writing produced by the children I observed and to indicate something of their use and meaning.

C. Analysis of Artifacts: Genres of Children's Unofficial Writing

The children turned their not inconsiderable skills at writing to a variety of purposes. I am not aware of any special terminology or categorization of these activities on the part of the children. The activities themselves suggest the distinction of at least six uses, or minor genres, of unofficial writing. Some have been mentioned in passing (notes, signs, etc.).

Each minor genre involves a particular configuration of form, meaning and interactional context. The groupings of activities and their products (the artifacts) are fairly broad, but fairly evident. In the next section I will suggest generalized uses or functions for the writing, functions that involve two or more genres. Here the focus is upon the evident differences in the form of the writing and the salient differences in meaning or purpose (the factor that uniquely distinguishes "gifts"). I start with the genre most evidently concerned with the use of writing to transmit information; notes and messages, and then contrast it with the genre whose use is most evidently not that, gifts. The first four genres (notes and messages, gifts, announcements, etc., documents) all involve interactional contexts of one or another kind directly, while the last two (lists, etc., and notebook displays) do so potentially.

(1) Notes and Messages: One of the earliest uses of unofficial writing was the passing of notes and messages. Beginning at first grade level, children passed notes containing names and phone numbers. As the children's writing skills improved, these became more complex and evolved into "love notes", messages requesting response ("Circle Yes or No" notes), notes of anger, "pornographic" notes (a teacher's term, i.e., notes containing taboo words), etc. Notes could be passed quite openly or clandestinely.

> Letha had received a note from Michelle (sitting across from her). She opened it, read it and wrote something on the note. She turned around to glance around the room, saw me looking at her, and covered the note with her hand. A moment later she turned back to look at me. I was observing her out of the corner of my eye. She quickly passed the note to Michelle and turned back to her workbook.

At times children even communicated with the teacher or with an adult by handing the person a note. (The example of the girl using a note to request the privilege of sitting with a friend has already been mentioned.)

(2) "Gifts of Writing": Closely related in form to the transmission of notes and messages was the use of writing as a "gift". Among the first spontaneous uses of writing reported by teachers in the lower grades were pictures with captions given to the teacher. This practice continued all the way through the upper elementary grades when children also began to give poems, stories, signs and decorative messages to the teachers. For example, the following was taped to the side of a teacher's desk:

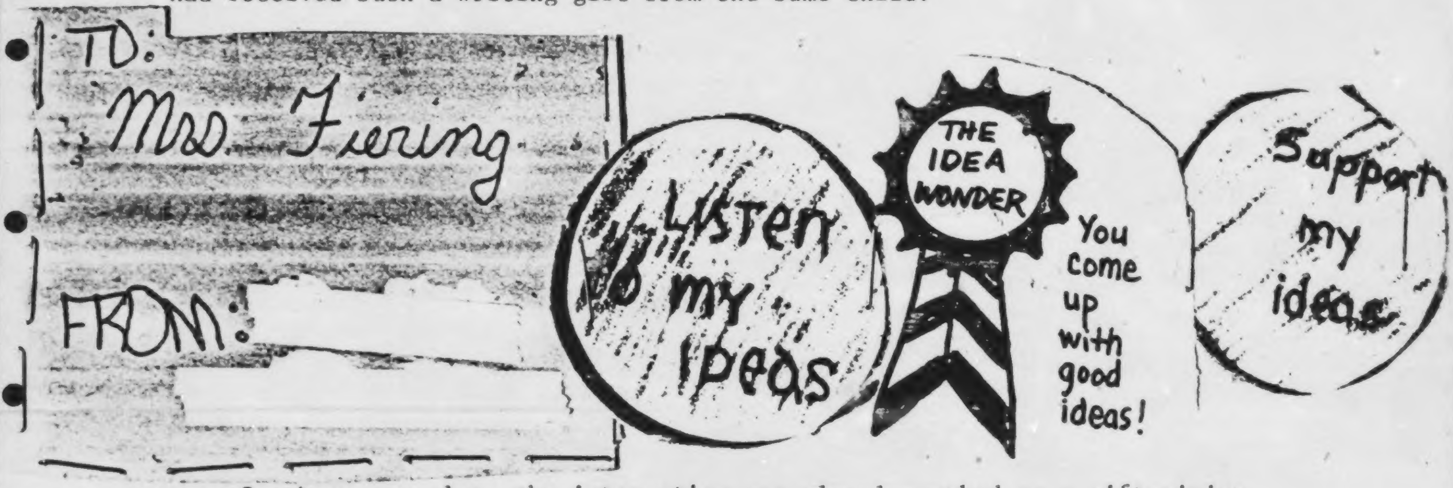
"Harts is sweat
Harts is a treat
If you want to eat
Just take a seat

By Anjanette
For my wonderful
Teacher Mrs. Brown
I hope you enjoy it.

The giving of such writing gifts may have been an indication that children recognize writing as a "marked" form in our culture. Often it was not the content of the writing that carried the message (sometimes a poem or a story, or a picture with a caption), but simply the act of writing and giving that implied a message of social relationships and perhaps the seeking of adult approval.

> Alicia came up to me and handed me some papers
> "What's this"
> "Poem"
> "Did you write it for class?"
> "No, I just wrote it."
> "Shall I keep it?"
> "Yes." (I thanked her and she returned to her desk.)

In another example a girl handed me a few bits of commercial writing. She had fashioned an envelope out of construction paper. Inside were three cut-out "Buttons" taken from a book. The writing had absolutely no context for me but I accepted it as a gift with thanks. Later the teacher told me that she too had received such a writing gift from the same child.



In these examples the interaction was clearly marked as a gift-giving situation as opposed to a message transmission situation. The writing contained in the gift did not necessarily directly transmit a message pertinent to the immediate context (for example, the poem given as a gift might be about Christmas or playing outside in the snow); the writer was frequently thanked; and the gift was often publicly displayed. Thus, the content of the writing and the reaction of the receiver clearly marked the situation as different from message transmission.

(3) Announcements, Signs, Board Writing: One of the favorite media for writing was the chalkboard, possibly because of the lack of spatial restraint, the different writing implement, the ease of erasing, etc. (One teacher even suggested that children were able to concentrate better at the board.) Much of the writing done at the board looked like teacher writing in both form and content: assignments ("Do classwork in kits"), punishments ("No recess"), and work problems. At times the form resembled a teacher's use of writing but the content was quite different as in the case of the following (slightly confused) announcement:

> "Today is February 29. Pearl Harbor Day. Attention Ladies -- All Ladies should Grab a man." (This example was described to me by one of the teachers.)

Blackboard writing is a salient case in which a use of writing that directly resembled an adult use must have clearly different underlying functions. Children lack the direct authority of the teacher and only pretend to step into the teacher role through the use of certain literacy styles and devices. Often this type of writing was accompanied by a stance and speaking style that imitated the teacher. Thus, a child writing a "make believe" assignment or problem at the board was not transmitting information in the same sense as the teacher: he was taking on the trappings of a role.

In addition to writing at the board, children created similar public displays of writing, making signs and announcements that were posted on walls or taped to desks.

LOOK

If your desk has a name tag on it you have to look around for your name tag and sit down because that is your new seat.

Thank you
Mrs. Wilson

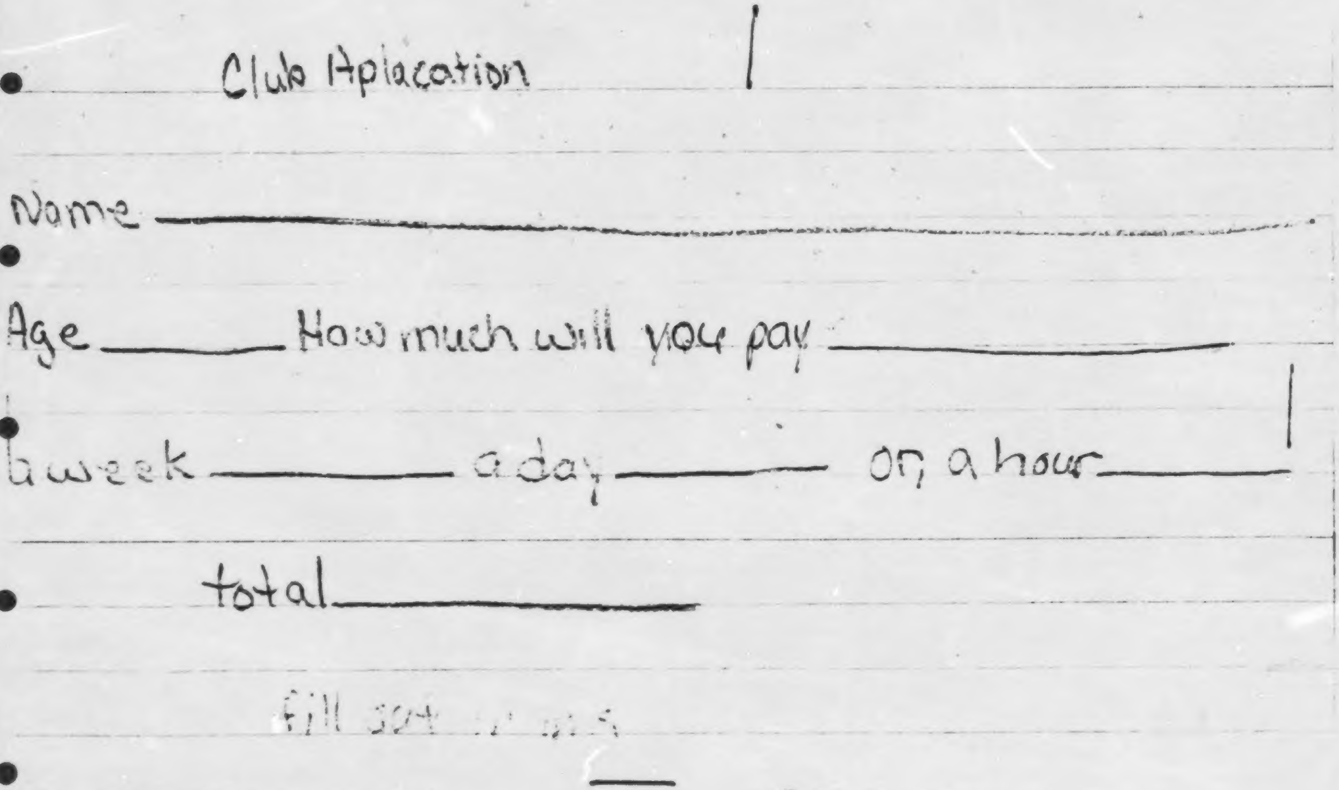
If your not satisfied with your seat see me Lisa Gale if I say you have to stay you have to stay.

Thank you

If you want your seat change put your name on a piece of paper and what table you would like to sit at and who you would like to sit by.

(4) Documents: By documents I mean two things: first, the imitation of a form that has overtones of bureaucracy or officialdom; second, the creation of a written artifact that defines a relationship between message and receivers and elicits a predetermined response or action from the receiver.

The documents created by the children were to be used by others and wer intended to control their access to an event or to shape their response in some fashion. These included club member forms, registration forms for a show, club passes and several other examples illustrated below and on the next page.



Club Aplacation

Name ____________________

Age ______ How much will you pay ____________

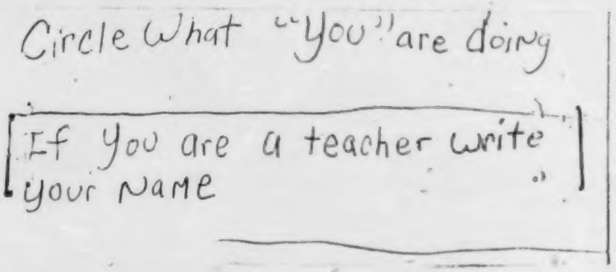
a week ________ a day ________ or a hour ________

total ____________

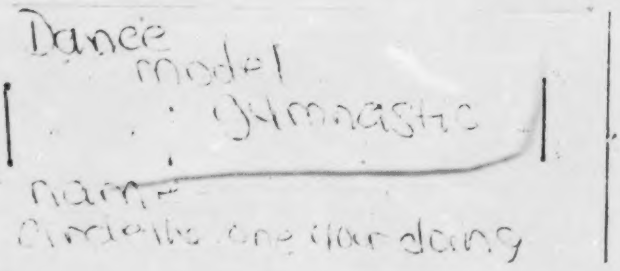
fill out [illegible]

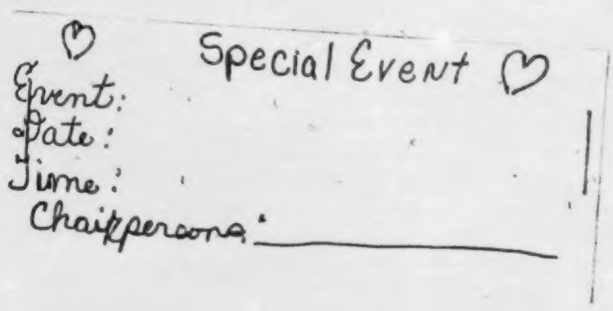
These artifacts obviously imitate the official forms and documents children encounter frequently in their lives. They control the movement of others and also structure very particular types of response from the recipient, specifying exactly what type of information he should provide and where it should go. Like adjacency pairs in speech, these documents determine written adjacency pairs. For example, on the line marked "Name ______" it is appropriate to write "Mary" or "Mary Jones" or "Miss Jones" ... but not "10 years old" or "50c". From the viewpoint of the creator of these documents, to be able to structure exactly the kind of literacy response desired would likely be a fairly high level skill.

tickets for
participation in a show.


Circle What "You" are doing

If You are a teacher write
your Name


Dance
model
gymnastic
name
Circle the one your doing


Special Event

Event:
Date:
Time:
Chairpersons: ______________

The following was a worksheet made up for a "homework club" started by 2 girls:

Deserts Questions

1. What are deserts?
2. What do we often think?
3. Are there places where water is salty? Yes ☐ No ☐
4. What kind of deserts lie by the poles?
5. Are there very few plants that grow in salt regions? Yes or no

Denise 202

Of course the child who fills in the document also had freedom (within the structure of the information requested) to turn the document to his own purposes. In the example below, Weldon, who likely had very little interest in joining the homework club, used the application as an opportunity to poke a little playful fun at the girls.

Club Aplacation

Name Weldon Howard

Age 11 How much will you pay 1¢

a week 1¢ a day 1¢ or a hour none

total 3¢ ha ha ha

fill out in ink

(5) Lists, Tables and Charts: The prevalence of lists, tables and charts in children's unofficial writing recommends their treatment under a special subheading, as examples of both a special kind of spatial arrangement and a specialized use of writing to order information.

Children quickly became proficient with the arrangement of words into lists. My earliest example came from a first-grade class, the discovery of a small spiral-bound notebook on one page of which was neatly printed what looked to be a shopping list:

Bread
milk
eggs
pamper

In the fifth-grade it was frequent to find children setting up lists of personal information:

Name	Davida Ellen
Grade	5th
Teacher	Mrs. Brown
Room	400
Friend	Lisa
Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Fiering

The children were also able to combine lists to create simple tables:

Sarita Amelia Jackson

Name		
Mrs. Lee	Grade 1	200
Mrs. Roper	Grade 2	301
Mrs. Hanson	Grade 3	204
Mrs. Hunt	Grade 4	106
Mrs. Kenny	Grade 5	400
Mrs. Esposito	Grade 6	402

Tables are especially interesting because they are essentially literate devices (a point made by Jack Goody). The table is able to simultaneously transmit two sets of information. In the above example, the vertical columns list all teachers, all grades, all room numbers, and the horizontal rows list the teacher with the grade with the room number. This simultaneous transmission of two sortings of information can't be done orally.

Other examples of the children's ability to imitate specific writing formats include the creation of rollbooks, schedules, address books and calendars. In all these cases the child demonstrates that he has mastered and can work with certain conventions for ordering information. Children are most likely exposed to this form of information ordering in the context of subject matter information like math, social studies, etc. or simply in the context of a number of writing uses common in the environment around them (calendars, rollbooks, etc.) The children adapt the arrangement to their own needs. That these lists and tables were genuinely useful to the children is apparent from the following example.

On Terrance's desk I found the following table:

Order	Fistball
1. Malcolm	Leftfield
2. Brendan	2nd Base
3. Bill	Centerfield
4. Terrance	Pitcher
. . .	. . .

When I asked if I could have the paper, Terrance told me that the boys needed it to keep track of players and positions on their fistball team. He offered to let me copy the table but would not give me the original.

(6) Notebook Displays: Children frequently used writing to make displays of sorts that were placed on desks or covered work folders and notebooks. Some of the most amusing examples of these displays were done by a group of boys who literally covered every square inch of notebook space with what I termed "status writing": "Lover of the World", "I wear nothing but the best", "Girls don't mess with me cause I mess with them". . . (See p.18 for example from Warren's notebook cover.) This kind of writing was explained to my by one of the boys:

S: Do girls write like this?

Peter: (vehement) No!

S: What do girls write?

P: They write, like, let's see. Like Terella. She just write "Terella Jones."

S: So just boys write this.

P: Yeah

S: How come they write this way?

P: You know. They just stroll down the street with that walk, being cool. You just give him (pointed to Warren) a book full of empty pages and he'll fill it with graffitti.

In only one example did a girl do this type of "status writing" ("Rina, Foxy One") on her journal cover. In all other cases girls created different types of writing displays, mostly names and designs with fancy letters, remarks about the classroom ("402 is best"), or even religious phrases, "Love the Lord". Thus, the role differentiation that encouraged young boys to be boastful and "macho", while young girls were to be coy and aloof, clearly carried over into writing as well.

Notebooks were also used, of course, to express claims about self and others, boasts and taunts, inside as well as outside. A useful term may be ana, used in literature for the collections of the sayings or talk of a person. Of course teachers may direct students to use notebooks as journals, diaries, and the like. Children would also use their notebooks to transcribe or create written equivalentsof oral genres that teachers would not assign. Among these children, for example, "busts" is the term used for ritual insults, exchanged between child and child, either playfully or seriously. One boy created a booklet of written "busts" about a classmate who was very light-skinned:

> "Marvin is zebra boy. He so white he glows in the dark.
> When he gets married his family gonna look like the Willises
> on the Jeffersons on T.V. He read white and blue like the flag."

The booklet was discovered and confiscated by the teacher. Another boy wrote out several chanting rhymes such as:

> "Hate to be mean but you need listerine
> Not a sip not a swallow
> But the whole darn bottle."

In such instances the children had learned that they could put originally oral genres into writing and were using writing as a new channel for a familiar form of interaction, for their own satisfaction or amusement and potentially that of others.

D. The Functions and Meanings of Children's Unofficial Writing

It is clear from the observations that a discussion of children's spontaneous writing must distinguish between the directly observable piece of writing and the functions it may have for the participants. For example, if a teacher writes on the chalkboard, "Talking Names--No Recess", it is likely to be taken seriously as an order (and explanation) to the class. The teacher has the authority to do that. If a child writes the same message on the chalkboard, the purpose is likely somewhat different. Clearly the text, the abstract act, does not itself reveal purpose unequivocally, and purposes must be sought within the context of role relationship and setting.

Purposes can be dealt with at two levels. One is that of the level of communication itself, that is, the intention of a message, written or oral, may be to transmit information, to order, to request, to entertain, etc. Especially important for the issue at hand is the level of choice of communicative means, that is, why the message is put into writing, rather than spoken. It is on this issue of choice that the discussion will focus.

The functions of a message, of course, go beyond the intentions, known or inferred, of the source. The outcome may succeed or fail in realizing the source's purpose. Moreover, purposes and consequences may be multiple. At the end of this section I suggest seven recurrent functions which the several kinds of unofficial writing of these children appear to have. The analysis of functions is tentative, inferred from the artifacts and observations of activity, and further research should be undertaken to determine its general validity. Such inferences run the risk of being skewed by adult preconceptions about children and about writing. Still, it is important to address the subject, because in it is a key to the meaning and motivation for writing in the lives of the children. (See Appendix C for a discussion of the notion of literacy as a powerful force in the children's lives.) Even this tentative analysis is able to show that no simple or single interpretation of the function of a piece of writing for children will suffice.

The discussion parallels the preceding discussion of genres. Under each heading I will discuss further my observations of context and suggest more of the possible meanings of the writing.

(1) Notes and Messages: Some of the most common incidents of spontaneous writing in the classroom involved the transmission of information from a writer to a receiver in the form of a note or letter. In the example that would perhaps be closest to adult note and letter writing, the receiver was absent and the written message was used as a substitute for an oral message. This occurred

in one classroom when children wrote notes to an absent teacher and asked me to deliver the message to her. Writing functioned for the children (as it commonly does for adults) as a substitute for oral transmission (cf. Heath, 1980).

Adult observers might tend to assume that all instances of note passing in the classroom are simply cases of the transfer of information from writer to receiver when oral transmission is precluded. However, given the normal classroom situation in which children were often relatively free to talk, their desks being arranged face-to-face in tables, and movement around the classrooms often allowed, written messages did far more for the children than simply transmit information from writer to receiver. A variety of meanings were communicated by and a variety of functions served by the act of message writing and these extended beyond the content of the message itself.

> For example:
>
> The class was all working quietly on seatwork. Darwin was sitting across the room from me. He signalled to me and mouthed some words, "Do you want some candy?' I shook my head no. A few minutes later he got up, walked around the back of the class, stood by my chair for a moment and handed me a note.
> "Dear Sue. Come to my desk and help me with my math.
> sign Darwin Smith to Sue O.K. "

Rather than having used a written message, Darwin could have either signalled me from across the room (as he'd done earlier) or walked to my desk and whispered the message. That he did neither suggests that the process of writing and delivering a note had meanings for Darwin beyond information transfer. Darwin might have been imitating a type of message transmission common among adults, indicating an acceptance of adult literacy role models. He may have been attempting an ironic secrecy, actually highlighting the message transmssion by his circuitous route around the classroom and perhaps underlining this particular message (a business-like request for help) as opposed to a more casual gesture (offer of candy). In fact, the form of his message suggested a more formal approach to the situation, including his imitation of a signed "form." Thus, writing may have functioned in special ways for Darwin--role imitation and the highlighting and framing of a request.

Messages involving emotion were frequently transmitted in writing. These messages included affectionate letters and poems for the teacher, "love" notes to classmates, messages of affection to friends and messages of dislike and anger. The transmission of emotional content in writing permitted the child to avoid a situation that could have proved embarrassing or difficult were a direct verbal message emitted. In an example cited by Claire Woods-Elliott, an observer in one of the classrooms involved in this study, a child "wrote a particularly vindictive note to another and this was intercepted by the teacher. The note contained a string of swear words (all 'correctly spelled,' the teacher remarked with irony). When she was asked to explain why she had written the note, the child stated that she could not express her anger aloud. Writing had obviously served a real communicative purpose for this child."

Teachers have suggested further reasons for the children's use of written messages when verbal messages are possible. One teacher felt that writing held power for the children, a power that was not part of the verbal channel of communication. Perhaps this is an indication of a very early recognition by children that writing is often a "marked" form in our culture and carries special force not inherent in speech.

The use of writing can also be related to "play" (and include role model imitation). In the following example, the message could easily (in fact more easily perhaps) have been delivered verbally; there was no need for secrecy; and no inherent embarrassment in the message transmission.

> Francie and Kara, who sat directly across from each other, were exchanging notes quite openly during free time. The notes were left lying face up on top of their desks. I came over to look and asked to keep the notes. The girls agreed:
>
> "Dear Kara
> I am going to get my money when I go home.
> Yours sincerely,
> Francie Robbins"
>
> "Dear Francie
> I am going to get my money from nowhere.
> Yours sincerely,
> Nobody"

In this incident the two girls seemed to be simply "playing" with writing, imitating a use of writing (message transmission) and a particular format for writing (the letter) that were not appropriate in any serious sense to the immediate context. They continued this kind of "play" for several minutes more, writing each other letters that contained friendly teases. The girls' use of writing to share messages went beyond information transfer. The exchange of writing, independent of the content of that writing, was used to solidify and signify the relationship of friendship.

A related incident may be a note tacked to a child's desk:

> "Since you have a place why can't I stay you O.K. you can pay have of the rent O.K. my desk is very I use O.K. coufe up the dollar fifty. Hey man what's all the rent money you have to pay or get out.
>
> Sincerely yours"

The child explained that she wrote the note because someone had asked to share her desk. It may have transcribed or recreated part of the conversation between the two, but in any case puts the other child on written notice, as it were, framing the question of sharing the desk as if an adult matter of sharing the payment of rent.

(2) "Gifts" of Writing

Gifts of writing, although resembling the passing of notes and messages in form, clearly served a distinct function. As stated previously, the actual writing might not contain a message pertinent to the receiver, and the primary meaning carried by the writing was contained in the act of transmission itself. A child giving a teacher a poem about hearts and treats or about Christmas wasn't seeking to pass on information about the topic of the poem as much as to establish a social relationship with the recipient of the writing--affection, approval, recognition. In this way the children extended the custom of gift giving to include gifts of writing. (Similar incidents occurred in the homes as well, when, for example, a child wrote a poem and mailed it to an aunt in another state.)

Examples in the children's environment may have encouraged and suggested this type of writing use--greeting cards, poems that teachers had children write as gifts for occasions like Mother's Day--but the children extended this to include instances that would not be typical of adult directed writing use (for example the child who simply gave me the poem which in itself conveyed no particular message to me but which I interpreted as an act of affection and desire for approval).

I want to stress that although I refer to the function of this use of writing as one of establishing social relationships, it differs from the direct transmission of messages concerning social relations, e.g., "I love you", "Be my friend", etc. In the use of writing as a gift, the child recognizes that writing is a marked form in our culture and written artifacts (of certain kinds) carry potential value beyond their content. Like the adult professional writer who dedicates his work to others, the child uses his increasing skill at creating such valued artifacts to establish social relationships and maintain social interactions.

(3) Announcements, Signs, Writing on the Chalkboard: In addition to the use of writing as a direct link between an individual writer and specified receiver, there were cases in which the child directed the writing to a very wide and somewhat unspecified audience. Examples of this type of writing included announcements and messages on the chalkboard, "Today is February 29. Pearl Harbor Day. Attention Ladies- All Ladies Should Grab a Man " ; signs on desks, "Nobody disturb me. Not you Tarella"; or on the wall, "If you want your seat change put your name on a piece of paper..."; imitation of writing done by the teacher, "Do classwork in kits", "Talkers", etc. In some cases, although the message appeared to be directed to an individual, it functioned as well to address a larger group.

> Mary was sitting at a table with three other children. She traced a picture from a book she had in front of her and offered it to me and all the children at the table, but no one accepted the picture. Mary then wrote on the paper, "Rodney Towers Keep it," and laid it on Rodney's desk. He ignored the picture, and Mary went on to other activities.

Writing helped Mary escape from a dilemma and perhaps spared her some embarrassment. When her oral message was frustrated, she resorted to writing to address not only Rodney, but the group as a whole. This created a permanent record and a public statement that the picture now belonged to Rodney, thus relieving Mary of responsibility for it.

In all the incidents above, writing enabled the child to do something that would have been difficult verbally (at least not without the teacher's assistance), to seize the "floor" and address the class, or a group of people, making a public and semi-permanent statement.

(4) Document Writing: As mentioned previously, the creation of documents (tickets, registration forms, applications, passes) seemed closely related to issues of control and regulation of others. The child was able to exert two simultaneous aspects of control: (1) to permit or prohibit access to an event or organization, and (2) to structure the response required of the recipient. Both of these functions could be served orally (e.g., perhaps a "password" to enter a club), but writing served as well to create a permanent record that could be referred to later and, again, "marked" the interaction in a fashion that created certain formality and "officialness".

> Rena walked to Leona's desk to request an application form for Leona's homework club. Leona handed her one and Rena asked, "Do I have to write in ink?" Leona nodded yes. Rena borrowed my pen and began to fill in the blanks, asking Leona questions from time to time about what to write. When she finished she handed the application to Leona who placed it in a folder.

In this incident, writing in ink, rather than pencil, was part of the meaning of formality and permanence created by the document.

Very obviously, these documents and interactions were imitations of written artifacts and events that children saw used by adults or had experienced in their own lives. Children gradually began to perceive that certain writing events were associated with certain social interactions. In the example below, the child created a written artifact to fulfill what she perceived as the literacy requirement of a situation.

I noticed on one girl's desk a homemade "Library Pass".

Library Pass
Mrs. Johnson
Student Aretha
morning
When afternoon Grade 5 Age 10
lunch

> Aretha told me that this pass was to allow her to enter the library before school each morning and that she had made the pass herself after having lost the original supplied by the librarian. I asked if the teachers would let her enter the building with this pass. "Yes, because they know me." (emphasis mine).

In this example, Aretha chose to uphold the perceived requirements for a literacy transaction, even though it was interpersonal relationships ("They know me") that actually enabled her to enter the building.

Through their experiences in the classroom and in their homes and community, children came to realize that certain types of interactions required accompanying literacy acts: audiences require tickets, clubs require applications, show participants require registration forms. . . As the children began to create and imitate the organizations and environments of the adult world, they "filled in" the correct literacy events.

(5) Lists, Charts, Tables. These artifacts included calendars, schedules, rollbooks, lists of friends' names, books of addresses and phone numbers, list of personal information, etc. They included both retroactive and prospective documents (those that order past information and those that regulate future information) and certain of them began to appear quite early, an example already mentioned being the first grader's shopping list.

Children used these artifacts in ways that were similar to adult use--marking events on calendars, writing names into address books, etc., and thus demonstrated their conceptions of certain of the very practical uses attached to writing. However, the functions of these artifacts could go beyond simply information sending and memory support. Often children created certain kinds of written artifacts in an attempt to adopt some of the power and authority that traditionally accompanied the use of the artifact. For example, one boy, Kevin, made a series of rollsheets with the names of all the children in the class and a column for each day of the week. He explained to me, "I put down kids' names and then I mark stars and grades and stuff...I'm gonna put down Es beside all the girls' names 'cause they dumb." Kevin, in adopting a written artifact that traditionally belonged to the teacher, had borrowed some of the teacher's authority and now held a playful power over his classmates, an ability to judge and record, not available to others.

Certain of these written artifacts seemed to be attempts by the children to exert control on themselves and on their world. Literacy became a tool for the imposition of order. For example, in making a calendar or schedule, the child was able to look forward and back, to predict and remember. Lists of personal information (e.g., all the child's previous teachers and room numbers) might have served to create a sense of personal history, an identity maintenance of sorts. The child who listed his "Best Friends, Play Friends, Team" was taking account of personal relationships in a way encouraged by literacy. The children who kept track of classroom romances were ordering and reifying, for the moment at least, what were essentially shifting and unstable interpersonal relationships. In these examples, I suggest that writing was not only used to meet needs of information storage and ordering, but also to meet the interactional and identity needs that became pressing as the children approached adolescence.

(6) Display: Writing often occurred in the absence of a specified receiver and without a defined act of transmission but in such a manner that an audience was suggested or implied. The boys who wrote status messages all over the covers of notebooks-- "Lover of the World", "I wear nothing but the best"---were using writing to convey messages about themselves without directly transmitting those messages to a specified receiver. This type of literate "background noise" could hardly be done verbally. Certain boys were particularly adept at this type of writing display. As one child pointed out about another, "You just give him a book full of empty pages and he'll fill it with graffitti." Others were more tentative:

> Raymond had a notecard taped to his desk with his name written on it in large letters. He wrote on the card, "is the best" under his name. He outlined "best" and then blacked it out so that only "Raymond is the" was left. Finally he blacked out "is the" and left "Raymond".

One girl used the cover of her diary, a kind of recognized personal domain, to make what seemed to be a "dig" at her new teacher. She wrote on the diary, "My diary and I like Mrs. Bender." (Mrs. Bender was the previous teacher who had been transferred.)

This type of writing display may well have done interpersonal work for the child, allowing him to express feelings about himself, his friends, his class, without directly transmitting those messages and risking challenges. Often this writing occurred as part of the recognized personal domain of the child--his notebook, desk, work folder. Thus, writing functioned as a way to mark off a personal domain, and within that domain, to make statements about the self and others. This is true for the use of the notebook to transcribe or create street rhymes and "busts" as well, writing substituting for what originally would have been oral. It is just possible that such recording served memory-support, but I have no evidence of that and it seems unlikely. The children were full participants in their oral culture and the writing appears to have been an additional form of personal participation, not a script or aide-memoire.

(7) Summary Analysis: Writing is often thought of as first of all a record of speech, a means of overcoming the obstacles of distance, time and memory. The children demonstrate an understanding of these values of writing, but clearly writing has other values for them as well. While inference as to the full meaning of a particular incident of writing use may be tentative, it is evident that there do exist a variety of meanings, or functions, some of them not considered at all in the context of "official" writing. The children's uses of writing seem to have at least seven recurrent functions.

(a) substitute for oral messages (either because of the absence of the receiver, prohibitions on oral transmission, or embarrassment involved in oral transmission),

(b) imitation of adult role models and events (trying on literacy role as part of "play", filling in a context with the proper literacy events, adopting power associated with certain literacy events),

(c) framing, marking of an event (e.g., as more important, more business-like),

(d) control of public interaction (getting the floor, making a public statement, controlling access to events),

(e) memory-support/ordering of information,

(f) identity maintenance (sense of personal history, statements about self),

(g) establishing of social relationships (by the act of writing as well as by the content of the writing)

(a,e, and g are similar to certain uses of literacy listed by Heath (1980)).

The relationships between the genres and the recurrent functions can be be indicated in a chart:

	(1) Notes, etc.	(2) Gifts	(3) Signs, etc.	(4) Documents	(5) Lists, etc.	(6) Displays
(a)	+		+			
(b)	+		+	+	+	
(c)	+		+	+	+	
(d)	+		+	+		
(e)				+	+	
(f)					+	+
(g)	+	+	+			+

The chart is preliminary in that further observation might extend the series of recurrent functions found with a particular genre, and the set of genres found to involve a particular function. Thus, one can imagine that a child might use a sign to write down information he wanted to remember or create a list that would substitute for an oral transaction (such as a Christmas list to be sent to Santa Claus or an absent grandparent). The absence of a mark for the intersection of (3e) then, or (5a) may well be accidental. The transmission of a list of members of a team or of classroom romances, might serve to establish a social relationship (5g). In this respect the chart can be used as a guide to further observation that would test its comprehensiveness.

It does not seem likely, however, that every theoretically possible relation of genre and function would occur. Writing displays, for example, such as "I'm the King", "Lover of the World", seem unlikely to occur for memory support or ordering of information. In short, (6e) may be a natural rather than accidental gap.

Despite its preliminary status, the chart does allow certain important points to be made. First of all, actual observation is obviously necessary. The written objects, artifacts, are in themselves insufficient for an understanding of the meaning of writing. The existence of a note might readily show that writing may substitute for oral transmission but without information about the context of use, the note itself might not suggest the framing of an event. One would need to know that the child could have communicated orally, had done so previously for such a purpose and had chosen to write in order to mark the change in mode of interaction. The existence of a list might readily suggest memory support, but not necessarily identity maintenance or the establishing of social relationships without knowledge of the use made of the list.

Secondly, an attempt to infer meaning from the artifacts alone is likely to miss the multiplicity of meanings which instance of any one genre may have. Sustained observation shows that none of the genres serves only one function, with but one exception. Of the six genres, two (1,3) serve five of the seven recurrent functions; two (4,5) serve four; one (6) serve three. Only one, the genre of gifts (2), defined in terms of the phatic function of contributing to an interpersonal relationship, apart from what is actually written, was observed in relation to only the one function (g), and that limitation may be accidental.

Conversely, none of the recurrent functions is associated with only one genre. Three of them (b,c,g) are associated with four of the six genres; two of them (a,d) are associated with three, and two of them (e,f) with two.

A third point is that more than one function may be associated not only with the same genre, but indeed with the same object and act. It would be a mistake to let such a chart suggest that there is a one-to-one relationship in a given instance. A single act may involve all the functions of which a genre is capable. The actual range of meaning in a given instance may well vary with the child. A full analysis of the meanings of writing to children would seek to trace the actions of individual children through a variety of settings so as to gain greater insight into the range of meanings for them.

In considering the plurality of functions that a given instance may serve, one should look for order or hierarchy among them. In the case of gifts, for example, the function of establishing social relationship is necessarily primary, by definition, but other functions might be secondarily involved. One might even observe the primary meaning of gifts being subordinated to their exploitation for another purpose, such as getting the floor, depriving someone else of access to an event, or the like (under d). In the case of a note, sign, document or list, the imitation of an adult role model might be the primary function on one occasion and a secondary function on another. Clearly a full analysis of the meaning of writing to children will have to embed the immediate meanings of genres, as forms of distinct kinds, in an account of recurrent practices and individual profiles. The primary functions of a genre may differ from teacher to teacher, child to child. And of course, the preference for one or another genre as such will vary. A chart such as the one given is an ending point of this inquiry, but a starting point for further inquiry that will characterize and compare individuals and classrooms in these respects.

Whatever profiles of individuals and classrooms may show, they are likely to confirm one thing shown in the present chart, namely, the prominence of interactional considerations in children's unofficial writing. Two conventionally heralded functions of writing, cognitive aid to memory and organization of information, on one hand, and preservation of information across time, on the other, do not loom large. These are the only two functions associated with only two genres (e with 4 and 5, f with 5 and 6), and none of the types of genre are limited to these two functions. Of the functions associated with a wider range of genres, three (c, g, d) are primarily interactional, and two (a, b) have interactional aspects. A statistical analysis of the nearly two hundred incidents observed in terms of the chart would be misleading in its apparent precision, but interactional aspects of writing are preponderant in frequency of occurrence, just as they are in relation to genres.

The importance of interaction to the children's use of writing is apparent in even the kinds of writing initiated by adults and considered official genres. Children used writing to gain status among their peers through their success as writers and they established relationships with others (either positive or negative) by writing about those others.

It was very common, for example, for children to write stories and poems (both spontaneously and under teacher direction) and then share them with teachers and/or classmates. Thus, writing frequently ended in some type of performance/display, often initiated by the child himself. In addition, children used writing to cement certain social relationships by writing about or including other people in their stories.

> Andrew began collecting the stories. John said to Andrew "I'm gonna put you in Jaws, Andrew" (a promise to include Andrew in a future story) "I'm gonna have you killing the shark." Andrew smiled. When he left, John turned to Neil and me, "I'm really gonna have Jaws eating Andrew." We laughed.

John had first used the promise of inclusion as the hero of a story to establish a relationship of friendship and a moment later, playfully rescinded the promise. Children often did include other children in their stories and this could be considered a mark of friendship (depending upon what was said in the story).

> Jerome and the other boys asked Edwin who was in the play he was writing. Edwin listed a number of names, among which was Willard. Willard beamed.
> Willard: Check it out. He loves me! What's my name?
> Edwin: Sonny
> Willard: Check it out! Sonny.

In this example, the message of social relationships was not carried in the play itself (which was about smugglers in Hong Kong) but in the inclusion of a certain list of actors.

Writing also became a tool for banter and teasing between children. When I allowed children to "take notes" for me in my notebook, an activity whose function for me was one of objective observation and recording, the children transformed the situation into one in which they could do some of the interaction work normally done verbally. They began to write comments about other children's behavior:

> John is flapping his lips together...Kendra is still talking... John is bothering Fry...John is acting like a nut...Kendra and her pal is being newsee.

The "student ethnographers" thus fulfilled the constraints of observation but did so in such a manner that the writing became a way to tease and poke fun at others.

Whereas the textbook view of writing seems to emphasize the more personal, isolating functions of writing, treating audience as separate in time and space, these children seized opportunities to make writing one more tool for the kind of interactional work that is part of their daily lives.

The importance of interaction can be seen also in the frequency with which children made writing a trying-on of adult literacy roles, commonly public roles, such as those of teacher, reporter, nurse or the like. Much of the writing the children did spontaneously had such imitation as at least one facet. (See Appendix H for a discussion of the effect of the ethnographer as a role model for writing). The most salient examples were perhaps the children playing school in the classroom, "trying on" the teacher's role and imitating both "teacher talk" and teacher writing.

> During lunch recess, Mara went to the board and began to write math and reading exercises. She then called over one of the other girls, "Leora, come here and do your problem! I'm giving you an easy one because you haven't passed yet. Sharelle, do this easy problem. Now this is how we use our strategy. We plus the . . ."

The child-teacher kept up a running accompaniment to her writing, the style of speech matching the style of writing, and other children acquiesced for brief periods of time in their assigned role as pupils. Acquiescence was often shortlived, however, and the role relations were easily broken. One "pupil" replied to the teacher's instructions to "plus this problem," "Plus my butt!"

The adoption of the teacher's role implied an adoption of teacher's authority. One girl spent recess "writing names" on the chalkboard and talking to whoever cared to listen.

> "Jerene, your name is on my list.
> Dino, your name is on my list.
> These are bad people.
> No second chances in this class.
> Dino is very bad cause he got a colored star.
> Dino, you got a colored star from me."

Other examples of literacy role modeling included a girl who kept an "interview book" in imitation of a T.V. reporter (see Appendix F), the children who at home played librarian, secretary and nurse and accompanied the play with appropriate literacy acts, the boy who made a "rollbook" of his classmates' names, etc. In all cases, writing functioned as a way for children to begin to immerse themselves in and "try on" adult roles.

In one case, a boy who was very much a non-writer in the classroom, acted out a marvelous writing vignette that was a clear imitation of an adult role to which he aspired.

> (During a teacher-dictated spelling and vocabulary test)
>
> Peter pulled out a second sheet of paper and began to scribble on it. He "wrote" quickly, just making lines that resembled writing, almost like an adult writing very fast. He didn't seem to be listening to the teacher and stopped working on his test sheet. . . He continued scribbling rhythmically on the paper, saying "bink, bink, bink" to himself. I looked over. Peter grinned, "Heh, that's a new way to write notes." His scribbled page now had the format of a letter. He folded the paper, wrote his name and address on the outside and the word "emergency" on the outside. He held this up and showed it to Barney a few feet away.
>
> Barney: "What's that?"
>
> Peter shrugged, "Got to open it and find out." He opened the note and looked at it. Refolded it and wrote, "Capter Peter Kent." Talking to himself Peter said, "O.K., I got to sign this paper. O.K., O.K., here go my signature right here." He shrugged and lifted his arm in an exaggerated fashion as if signing an official form with a flourish. Then he opened the folded sheet, pretended to read it quickly, moving his head back and forth as if scanning from line to line. Finally, he wrote on the bottom of the paper, "answered," folded it and put it in his desk.

The performance ended here but it was apparent to me that Peter had placed himself in the role of an adult authority figure and was trying on the kinds of literacy acts that might accompany that role.

IV. PARTICIPANT STRUCTURES AND STYLE OF VERBAL INTERACTION

A classroom can be a kaleidoscope of shifting configurations of interaction as teacher and children move from one focus of attention to another, as lessons, activities and arrangements of people in relation to each other change. Features of behavior may depend upon particular arrangements. The unofficial writing of the children observed at Commodore and their literacy activities generally seem influenced most importantly by orientation toward interaction and speaking that cuts across particular arrangements. There is a significant contrast here to the findings of Susan Philips (1972) in her well-known study of Warm Springs Indian children. The children's white teachers frequently mentioned as a problem that the Indian children were "shy". Starting with this perception, Philips observed the children's behavior in relation to a series of arrangements of interaction used by the teachers. She identified three typical participant structures (1972: 377), each involving different ways of arranging verbal interaction, including rights and obligations to speak. In the first the teacher interacts with all of the children; in the second, she interacts with only some at a time (as in a reading group); in the third, the students work independently at their desks, with the teacher available for private verbal interaction initiated by the student. A fourth (infrequent) structure consists of students working in small groups that they manage themselves. Philips found that in the first two participant structures, where students must speak out individually in front of other students, Indian children were considerably reluctant to participate, especially when compared to non-Indian students. In the second two arrangements, the Indian children come to take more initiative, more so even than non-Indian students.

Philips' discovery highlights the dependence of perceptions of children's behavior on context. Teacher's perceptions of students and their problems may be based mainly on the child's performance in one context among many.

In the classrooms observed in this study the teachers frequently remarked that the children (unlike those at Warm Springs) were too talkative, too anxious to participate, unable to sit quietly and listen. This seemed to be true in any participant structure, whether the teacher was interacting with the whole group, with a small group, or one-to-one. For these children, apparently, a problem was created by a style of verbal interaction that held across structural arrangements of size of group and management of rights to talk.

A major part of the perceived problem had to do with two rules that are prominent in schools: when there is talk, one person talks, others listen; when certain things are being done, there should be no talk at all. Sometimes the rule that only one person talk was set aside for a choral mode of interaction, everyone talking, reciting, reading in unison, but infrequently. Silence during periods of silent reading, writing and seat-work was consistently expected. Teachers constantly stressed the importance of the proper verbal conduct: "one person talks at a time"; "Be quiet and listen"; "Read silently". Silence was stressed as a prerequisite for listening, reading and writing.

The source of the problem appears to be that the children have patterns of their own for the use of speech. They often accompany individual activities with speech and they turn individual or group activities into occasions of collaborative verbal participation. (Linda May has documented this active participatory style at a neighboring school (see her report in this section)). In sum, reading, writing and other tasks are not the silent, solitary activities many expect or demand, and what is going on can be monitored although more than one person's voice is heard at a time.

Verbal accompaniment indeed seemed to be important to learning for these children. In one particularly salient example, the children had been assigned to work independently on math problems. Henry, a fifth-grader in the low track class, began to sing-song the problems to himself. The teacher asked him to stop because he was disturbing the other children. Later, I noticed Henry sitting by himself at the teacher's desk. The teacher explained that she'd realized that when Henry stopped singing, he seemed to have gotten stuck. She therefore moved him to a secluded area and told him to sing away.

In a second instance, the relationship between verbalization and activity was equally marked. A particularly dreamy child had been playing with something on his desk during the time he was to have been writing a composition.

> I walked over and stood by Weldon. He began to talk (half to me, half to himself it seemed). "Let's see, what would I do if I had all the money in the world. Put it in the bank and give the rest to charity. Heh! Heh! He then began to write down what he had said.

A kind of chain reaction had occurred; I triggered talk and the talk triggered writing. (I would stress that it was not that the child felt compelled to write because a "teacher" was present. This incident occurred late in the year by which time the children felt quite free to continue any mischievous behavior in my presence.)

One teacher in particular was aware of the children's need to verbalize as they worked. In teaching the children long division she relied on a choral mode. She taught the children to recite the steps of the problem with her, "Four goes into 16, 4 times, 4 times 4 is 16, subtract, bring down the two.." Often the entire class chanted the steps to the problem while the teacher wrote the answers at the board. (This type of instruction has been somewhat maligned but for some children, there may well be grounds for the traditional choral chanting activities.)

A second teacher, a specialist who taught the class once a week, had devised an approach that capitalized on the desire of the children to participate verbally in the learning situation.

> The lesson was fast-paced and sections of it had a lot of group response, mainly in the form of a chant. For example, when doing the numbers from 1 to 10, the class chanted them in a rhythmic pattern and there was a great deal of participation. I only noticed one or two boys who did not seem to be as interested as the others and even they were chanting, but just not watching the teacher. Then the teacher put up a chart on the board with a list of words. He began reading down the list in the same rhythmic pattern, and the children chanted with him. Again the participation level was high. The teacher stopped and children continued clapping and chanting with no guidance from the teacher. This continued for three or four minutes accompanied by laughter. One boy called out, "Hallelujah" and another began to harangue the class like a preacher, telling the students to respond, "I do".

At the end of the segment the teacher shifted gears in order to review the words and their definitions. The children still seemed keyed up and excited from the previous work but there was no longer any opportunity for group participation. Two tables of children began speaking to each other and only one table and a smattering of others seemed to be watching the teacher.

The contrast in the student's interest and involvement between the two interaction structures was quite marked. Children became involved spontaneously and excitedly in a situation that afforded them the opportunity for verbal participation (and, perhaps it should be stressed, rhythmic verbal participation).

The interaction structures established by the children themselves for reading and writing often contradicted the two basic interactional components of literacy stressed in the schools: silent and solitary. First children often turned reading into a group endeavor.

> On one occasion Weldon and two other boys had a large, low-level picture book, a story about two puppies. They took turns reading aloud the captions under the pictures. When they'd finished, Weldon grabbed the book, saying "Let me read this thing over again."

> On another occasion I entered the room at 8:50, before the class had started and sat down in the back alcove behind three girls who had their basic readers out and were reading aloud with each other. When they finished one story they began to discuss which to read next. One girl pointed out the story on Australia, "Look at these words."

(Later on that same morning I observed the same group of girls during reading group. One of them did not read or participate at all during the reading group time.)

Even in cases where the child was not reading with a group, the presence of other children could turn solitary reading into a verbal, participatory type of performance. On one occasion:

> Margie took out a book, Billy Goats Gruff, opened it and looked at a page. She held the book up to show me and said, "Look. That the Billy Goats. Here go Three Billy Goats Gruff." She thumbed through the book quickly, closed it and took out another book, a Christmas song book. She also thumbed through this and talked aloud as she did so. Her talking may have been directed to me but she didn't look or turn to me as she spoke. None of the other children at the table reacted to her.

On another occasion:

> John and Gerald sat next to each other, both reading Walicia's library books which were piled on top of her desk. John finished one book, returned it to Walicia and chose a picture book about a snowman. He commented, "I like this" and talked aloud to no one in particular: "He was walking... This one melt. . . This snowman." He asked Walicia if the picture was Frosty the Snowman and began to sing a snatch of the song. Then he continued his commentary. "Gee, they ain't melted."

When choosing library books, children frequently choose those books that could involve some type of verbal participation: riddle books, joke books, song books, etc. The library period was thus very much a time for collaborative reading.

> Two of the girls took out song books and sat together, quietly singing the songs. Many of the children walked around looking at each other's books, trading books, commenting on pictures, etc. Dorrine had a riddle book and read the riddles aloud to me and several other children.

Even when alone, children could still turn the reading situation into a verbal performance:

> The teacher handed out a ditto sheet about the Statue of Liberty. Leanne immediately began to read hers aloud. Her tone was intent and almost breathless as if the momentum kept her reading going. Her voice was quite loud, almost a normal talking tone.

This type of reading aloud is commonplace in the classrooms (especially the lower tracks) but is discouraged both by the reading manuals and in turn by the teachers.

Finally, in certain cases of silent reading that very much met the school ideal, aspects of participation and collaboration could still be sensed.

> In the library Lonnie and Henry (who were best friends) chose two different Curious George books and sat next to each other to read. Henry read aloud and Lonnie to himself. They finished the books simultaneously. Henry smiled and said, "That's a nice book. Boy!" Immediately they switched books and began to read again. Jerry came over to the table and began to talk to the two boys. Neither boy looked up or reacted in any way. They continued reading their books.

The boys had created a kind of reading "partnership". Friendship, the books chosen, and the intensity of participation in the reading situation had turned what was essentially individual activity into a collaborative endeavor.

At times, children were able to turn other official reading situations into collaborative efforts. During a filmstrip, when one child had been assigned to read the frames aloud, other children gradually began to participate.

> Toward the end of the filmstrip some children began reading aloud with Lonnie. At first it was Ina, then four or five others, then almost the whole class. This happened quite spontaneously.

That the children did engage in collaborative, oral reading does not mean that this was the only type of reading that occurred spontaneously in the classrooms. There were instances in all classes of children sitting alone and quietly reading. Certain children in particular would be prone to do this, but they were in a decided minority and the instances of this type of "sustained silent reading" were relatively rare, especially in the low track classes.

Writing, while more frequently undertaken as an individual activity, could still be turned by the children into collaborative and participatory endeavors. This sometimes occurred during the actual writing process. For example, a group of five boys were sitting with me at the back table, beginning to write a composition assigned from the reading text.

> The boys began asking each other questions or making remarks, and as each one spoke, the others would pick up on what he said and either answer the questions, ask more questions, relate some information, or sometimes just play with words. For instance, when Charles asked, "Ain't the Congo the Jungle?" someone started a word play with "Congo Bongo." Another time one of the boys mentioned China and the others began throwing out associated words, "Chinamen" "Chinese food." "Jesse James" led to "Brady Bunch" and "Billy the Kid."
>
> Discussion was also task oriented. William wanted to know what to call his cowboy hero and Lonnie suggested, "Semati Sam". Some of the boys argued about places on the map and jumped up from time to time to trace routes. Questions and requests for information were often addressed to me as well.

In this example, the boys engaged in a kind of "free association", picking up on and associating to whatever was said. At times the association got off track but at other times it was pertinent to the task and overall the boys continued to write quite diligently.

Two qualifications should be added to this example. Of the original eight children in the writing group, two girls and one boy immediately chose to isolate themselves and work independently on their compositions and a second boy later left the group and worked by himself. Second, the boy who first joined and later left the group, did not actually begin to write seriously until he had isolated himself. Thus, children showed clear preferences for writing alone or with others, and for some children the group situation may have been more distracting than it was productive. This will be discussed further in the section on applications.

Apart from the process of writing, children almost always managed to impart some aspect of verbal performance to the end result of the writing effort. Sharing of composition, reading of papers to friends or grabbing someone else's paper to read to a group, were widespread. Most teachers encouraged this sharing by allowing children to read their composition aloud at the end of the writing period. While not all children were anxious to "perform" their works, some children worked out complex strategies to gain the classroom floor. Thus:

> (Willard and Terrance had already read one story in front of the class and had completed a second story.) Terrance went up to ask the teacher if he and Willard could have a second turn to read. She refused. Willard then asked Edward to read their story for them and spent some time going over the words with him. Terrance had just changed the name on the paper to "Edward" when the boys remembered that Edward already had a turn. They changed the name to Malcolm and asked the

> teacher if they could read Malcolm's story to the class. The teacher agreed. Willard got up to read and announced the story as Malcolm's. I watched all these machinations with a laugh and turned to Willard, "You really pulled a fast one, didn't you." Willard grinned and said yes.

The tendency for some children to turn reading and writing into verbal, participatory activities can be seen in two contradictory lights: first, as a very natural style of interaction that should or could be capitalized on by the school in motivating and teaching literacy; second, as a potentially disruptive and distracting force that may prevent the child from accomplishing an assigned task. As one teacher said, "I usually make them read on their own. If they read together they start to talk and disturb others.

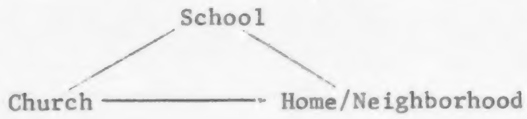
There is a contrast in how different children handle interaction during a literacy activity. Some manage to maintain side involvements while still accomplishing their main activity. Others simply wander off into the side involvement and get totally snarled and lost in the interaction.

Despite the potential dangers of collaborative activity (in terms of control) it is important to realize that the classroom's insistence on silent and solitary literacy is not a necessary and definitional component of literacy, but merely a cultural artifact (often reinforced by the demands of control) that should be open to scrutiny and adjustment if it is found to be more harmful than beneficial.

V. LITERACY ENVIRONMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

(A) Three Facets of the Literacy Environment

The preceding discussion has focussed on writing, particularly upon the uses children make of the writing skills acquired in school for purposes of their own, and upon the interactive, participatory style to which the children assimilate writing and literacy generally. Of course school is not the only source of experience with literacy for the children, and before considering applications of the research to the classroom, it is important to have some sense of the role of literacy in the lives of the children as a whole. For the fifth grade children of Commodore School, there are at least three major facets to their literacy world, a triangle of sorts:



Perhaps a distinction should be made between a "literate" environment, one which fulfills the conventional expectations of our culture and school, and "literacy" environments, which contain writing and stimulate its use, but not necessarily in the expected fashion. A literate environment would be expected to contain numerous books, newspapers, magazines and sustained interaction with these products of literacy. Teachers certainly maintained that the presence of books and the experience of being read to by parents are vital for success with reading, and that a home environment of a particular type with regard to language generally is necessary for academic success. The home environment of many of the children was believed to be lacking in these prerequisites, a lack blamed for failure in school.

We need to examine the kinds of literacy environments that actually exist in a community and how they may affect its children. A focus exclusively on the home may overlook other community resources. Church literacy, for example, is frequently overlooked, and I did not myself anticipate the importance for it that emerged in the course of observations in homes and the neighborhood and in discussions with parents and children.

The description of literacy environments is not exhaustive but does indicate something of the range of possibility for reading and writing outside of school. Among the points to be stressed will be the following:

(1) There were several important "official" literacy environments in the community. The most important was the church but other settings included Scouts, libraries and tutoring centers. (These latter are discussed in Appendix I). In many respects the official literacy environments in the community were remarkable in their resemblance to the public school setting, especially in the values expressed (work hard, learn, control yourself) and in the styles of interaction demanded (listen, one at a time, raise your hand). However, there were subtle but important differences that need to be explored.

(2) The school did little to tap these alternate community literacy environments. Despite the similarity of goals (proficiency with literacy, learning of academic skills, economic success), there was almost no collaboration between the community organizations and the school.

(3) Homes and neighborhoods were rich in examples of unofficial literacy, especially in the type of reading and writing which can be called "environmental". (Environmental literacy can be defined as the highly functional pieces of writing that surround both children and adults--signs, labels, advertisements, posters, flyers--that are not necessarily intended for use in a "marked" literacy situation. Analogous to the school setting, environmental literacy often does not "count" as reading or writing and is overlooked in considerations of what constitutes the literate environment.

(4) The media and advertising were especially rich sources of literacy. Advertising gimmicks were highly influential on children and often taught skills that the school stressed. Again, this potential was not tapped in any systematic fashion by the school.

(5) Certain objects and certain institutions were recognized as literacy "symbols" by both school and community (parents). These symbols (most prominent of which were books and the public library) were displayed and mentioned as a tangible demonstration of concern for literacy.

(B) Churches and Sunday Schools

The ties between religion and literacy were unmistakeable in the community. Despite varying degrees of direct contact with the church, almost every household observed owned a Bible, and children of kindergarten age mentioned first (and sometimes solely) the Bible as an example of what people read and write. Even on the streets of the neighborhood the child was apt to encounter certain religious sects who sold books and distributed religious tracts from door to door.

The religion practiced in the community clearly revolved around knowledge of the Bible and ability to read and recite scriptures. Children were very much aware of the importance of Bible reading in connection with religion. As one little boy explained baptism to me, "They put your head under the water, then you got to be good and read the Bible everyday." In the church services, reading of prayers, psalms and Bible passages was scattered throughout the worship and the Bible was frequently quoted as a source of comfort and inspiration. There was an important relationship between reading and speaking, the written word serving as a springboard for the spoken. It was the speech, the sermon, the dramatic presentation which played the major role in explicating and embellishing the written word, almost as if the Bible passage came alive only as it was verbalized. Thus a preacher might begin with a single phrase from the Bible and speak for an entire sermon, using that phrase as a reference point and theme.

This interplay between written and spoken modes was quite intricate throughout the church service, read passages alternating with fervently spoken and seemingly extemporaneous prayers, bits of Scripture being recited from memory and explicated. Often the written word served as a starting point for verbal fireworks and performances of such fervor and intensity that the church audience shouted out in reply to the preacher. For example, one section of a sermon began with a quotation from Exodus, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today". From that point, grounded in Biblical literacy, the preacher embroidered a sermon, punctuated by shouts from the congregation. He began by talking about Moses leading the Jews out of Egypt and how when they left Egypt, "There was a mountain on one side (Amen) and a mountain on the other side (Yes sir) and Pharoah's army in back of them (Yes sir). And some of those people said, 'No way. No way. We can't go here!' Just like some people do today (Yes sir). When it gets rough they say 'We can't do it (Amen). We can't find the way (Yes sir). We can't make it'(yes sir) And Moses, Moses, he went up to God and he said (Amen, Yes sir), he said, 'God! You didn't take me out of Egypt (Amen); you, you, you, you didn't lead my people out of slavery (Hallelujah); you didn't promise to save us (yes sir); you didn't say I saw your suffering (Amen), I heard your cries (Amen), I felt your sorrow(Yes sir) JUST TO LEAVE US NOW!!'"(Amen! Yes Sir, Amen!).

In an example from another Church, the minister also began with a quote from the Bible, something to the effect of "and Paul was called to be a prophet." He then played with the words of the text to the delight of his congregation. "Now you notice it doesn't say he was 'so-called'. We have plenty of so-called prophets today. We have plenty of so-called preachers today." The audience chorused their approval of this twist of verbal art.

In such ways a bit of written text becomes the starting point for a dramatic, fervent verbal performance that is the keystone to the service. "Text" and "utterance" are united in the sermon. (See Appendix A for Olson's discussion of the historical development of the concept of "text" and the distinction between text and utterance. The text gains meaning from the effort to contextualize it, to stretch it beyond the confines of strict interpretation. The preacher expands the text in a poetic and imaginative fashion, applying it to the lives of the people in an effort to inspire and comfort. This is a quite different process for dealing with text than that of the school.

Beyond the reading of Scriptures and singing of hymns, the church also used literacy as any large and complex organization would--sending out annoucements of events, publishing programs of special services, printing the school handbook, etc. During Black History month, reading of secular material was emphasized by one of the pastors who recommended books about famous Black men, spiritual music, etc. to the children. The pastor went on to lecture the children about the importance of school and the need to "fill out applications and forms and write essays if you want to get a job."

As might be expected, Sunday School classes are similar in many respects to public school classrooms. Children sit around a table or in groups of chairs facing the teacher who does most of the talking. The children are given magazine type books containing weekly Bible stories written in simple language and illustrated with bright colorful pictures. As in the public school reading groups, the children are called on to read, helped with the difficult words, and then asked questions about the passage, e.g., "Who remembers what Jesus' first miracle was?" "Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?" "How do we talk to God?" Often there are activities reminiscent of workbook type exercises or the puzzles and games found in children's magazines. For the older children assignments are written on the board, "Memorize the books of the Bible. Memorize the Scripture for the week, Luke 14:23 (write it out). Tell one incident that happened in the Book of Genesis." Rules and regulations are also quite similar to public school, "Wait a minute. Don't all answer at once." "I want to give everyone a turn to read," "Listen," and the similarity is often emphasized explicitly. "You know you're not supposed to chew gum in here, just like in public school."

Like public schools also, Church schools are involved in the very practical use of literacy for communication with parents and for record keeping. In the infant program, for example, each parent is given a booklet detailing the needs of infants at different stages of life, e.g., "Three months--need for faith and trust in the world." Each child who is registered in the infant program had a file containing two birthday cards from the church, and two certificates of enrollment or graduation, one for the infant program and the second for the nursery program. These "literacy artifacts" were signs of the link between child and Church, literacy being used to make tangible what was essentially an abstract relationship.

Despite strong similarity to public school classrooms, there were subtle but important differences as well. First is the importance placed on memorizing exact words of the Scriptures. At the end of each lesson is a quote from the Bible which each child reads over several times and attempts to recite from memory. This memorizing of phrases and passages is clearly an important part of the lesson, the link between written and oral knowledge and serves a particular and very practical purpose. As a teacher explained (after one girl related the incident of a woman who challenged her Christianity because of the church she attended), "People will sometimes tell you that if you go to a certain church you're not a Christian. But you tell them that the church is just a building we worship in and we ourselves are the real church. That's why I want you to learn to say these things, that we ourselves are the real church, because when people approach you, you have to know what to answer them about this." (emphasis mine.)

The quoting of exact Scripture verses is part of even the youngest children's education. I observed one teacher attempting to teach a four or five-year old child to repeat a very complex verse. Another teacher in the class for kindergarten and first grade children peppered her lesson with specific quotes from the Bible with exact reference to Book, passage and line. Some older children were quite adept at locating passages in the Bible. After having read a quote from the magazine workbook, one third-grade girl turned in her own Bible to the section mentioned and showed the teacher how the quote had been shortened. The teacher explained that a children's book would often condense the verse so it could be read more easily. (At that point, the teacher turned to me, handed me the Bible and asked me to read aloud the full verse. She commented "Praise God" when I finished. Clearly one way of welcoming a visitor was by inviting her to participate in the literacy of the church.)

Related to this emphasis on memorizing of exact words of the text was the intimate link (as in the church service) between text and oral discourse. The text was to be read, but not only to be read. It was then to be explicated, incorporated into stories, made the topic for discussion and somehow transformed into the context of everyday life. Teachers would frequently use incidents from their own lives to explain passages to the children and would ask the children to relate their own experiences. This in itself was not different from many of the techniques public school teachers use during reading groups. Only the relative importance of this type of contextualization differs. In public school it often suffices for children to answer questions about the facts of the text. In Sunday School, knowledge of the text has to be applied to the children's own lives.

Thus, reading in the church school has a strong moral concomitant, intended to teach specific information, and specific moral information directly and intensely related to life and to a sense of personal salvation. The Bible is not read to pass tests or answer questions or fill time. It is read to learn how to live properly and in this respect is much closer to the paradigm of literacy used in the 19th century schools. One finds here perhaps an intellectual, pedagogical expression of the participatory interaction so important in the children's own everyday behavior.

Of course, the church school uses a unified text, the Bible or Bible stories, a single source for reading material. Variety comes as the stories and sections are repeated in different contexts and forms and constantly interrelated. In contrast, the public school strives to expose children to a wide variety of texts, stories from many lands, eras and traditions, although how effectively the variety is related to the aims of life may be a different matter.

In the light of the communicative style displayed by the children in school, it is important to note that Bible study is very much a collaborative effort, reading and study being done aloud and as part of a group endeavor. In fact, as a visitor, I was almost always invited to participate in the class by reading aloud or commenting on the lesson and answering questions.

Bible literacy does then create a true literacy environment, one which is familiar in varying degrees to almost all the children, but is not capitalized upon at all by the public schools. Bible stories are a natural text for the children, yet even when the stories appeared in the classroom, the recognition and enthusiasm generated might be ignored. For example, during a reading group led by a classroom aid, the children became enthused when they turned to the story of Noah's Ark. The aid unwittingly squelched this enthusiasm by simply treating the story as any other in the reading text and insisting that the children read silently and answer questions. She gave them no opportunity to demonstrate their comfortable familiarity with the tale.

The influence of Bible literacy was apparent in the children's use of church and religious topics and phraseology in their own writing in school. (The influence may have come directly from the written source but more likely from the oral explications of the text), "God will love you," "Your sister in Christ", "Love the Lord", "The world is full of sinners". An interesting cycle is thus created. The written text is transformed into oral discourse and then reappears in a new (secular) context and in new written texts. Literacy moves from text to utterance and back to text.

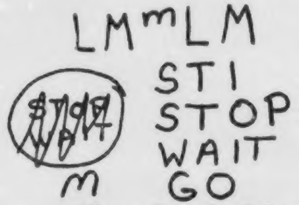
Written Text	Oral Explication	Written Text
(Bible, church tracts)	(sermon, Sunday School)	(School compositions, signs, etc.)

(C) The Homes

With a single exception, all homes visited had books prominently displayed, sometimes sets of encycleopedias or childcraft books, at other times shelves of novels or school books. Often parents mentioned that additional books were kept in other areas of the home, "She has a set of encyclopedias downstairs." "They have shelves of books in their room." Since I was a person connected in some ways with the school, parents seemed to volunteer to me the presence of books as a tangible display of an appropriate concern with literacy.

Obviously, certain homes did meet the criteria for a "literate" environment: homes where the public library was frequently used, where children were encouraged to read and were read to, where parents themselves did a lot of reading and paid close attention to their children's progress in school, etc. Even homes that did not meet these standard criteria could still be viewed as "literacy" environments. Books were not necessarily the only or even the most important aspect of the literacy environment. Homes also contained newspapers, magazines, posters, cookbooks, mail, record jackets and an ever popular source of writing--cereal boxes. In fact, when children were asked to list the kinds of things they read, the combined list stretched for pages and contained, beside the more normal items like books, such things as shirts, lunchboxes, medicine bottles, pens and pencils, towels, posters, love letters, ingredients, underwear, soda bottles, crayon boxes, funnies, tiles, news directions . . .

The importance of this type of literacy, which I have labeled "environmental", meaning that it is simply present in the child's vicinity (as part of the world around him) and can fade in and out of his attention, should not be underestimated. The influence of environmental literacy on children was apparent. One mother related a story about her young son learning to read. He would spontaneously go to the newspaper and painstakingly decode the words. Later, as he gained fluency, he began to read the words of the advertisements (often far above his grade level) in an easy and normal tone. "Like he'll just come in here and see this newspaper and start to read, 'Kool-Aid Apple flavor, artificial flavor.' He used to read this way, just sounding it out, but now he reads it like this" (demonstrated more fluent reading). The boy's younger sister, a kindergarten student, was beginning to do "literacy performances." The mother reported that the child would stand by the paper, see a picture of a barbecue grille and "read" the words "barbecue grille". (It was irrelevant what the words actually said. The child was demonstrating an ideological grasp of reading.) This same child showed me a scrap of paper on which she had written, "Stop Wait Go."



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She "read" the words back to me. When I asked her where she had seen the words, she pointed to the bottom of her sneakers where the words were imprinted as a design.

Parents frequently mentioned children playing school with siblings, teaching them different (often age appropriate) skills. One fifth-grade girl taught her first-grade brother cursive and times tables and her kindergarten sister printing and addition. Another fifth-grader, an only child, had a play area in a corner of the basement, complete with blackboard, encyclopedias and dolls that served as students. She played teacher, ranting and raving at the dolls and writing out notes for them to take home to their "parents". Other children described variations on literacy play, e.g., playing library: "We spread all our books out. Then my sister and cousins come to the library and get the books and I write down when they're due back and things like that." Two sisters had a series of literacy games that differentiated the literacy products involved in each situation. "Well sometimes we play school and write out assignments and then sometimes we play nurse and write out medicine and stuff like that and then we play secretary and pretend that the telephone, you know the touch kind, is a typewriter and we pretend we type out letters."

This type of literacy play began quite early. I observed two small girls, not more than three years old, playing on the sidewalk. One girl rode a tricycle and the second insistently handed her scraps of paper which she referred to as "tickets" and tried to climb on the back of the tricycle. The children, while not actually engaged in reading or writing themselves, had demonstrated a very clear enculturation into at least one societal context demanding the use of a written artifact.

Such play may be an important demonstration of the child's awareness of literacy in his life, his differentiation of different functions and uses associated with different people and his preparation to begin to take on literacy roles for himself. Clearly, children began easily to develop competency with the literacy roles that were important in their lives.

(D) The Neighborhood

Of course there is environmental literacy in the streets of the city as well. (The phenomenon of children finding reading material in their environment has been discussed by Heath (1980) in her study of communities in South Carolina). Street signs, store advertisements, graffitti, campaign posters, truck signs, homemade messages ("Allah is God"), book bags, shirts, jackets, umbrellas. . . the neighborhood was a jumble of reading material (perhaps much more so than a suburban area), and children were clearly aware of the reading material. They could be found staring at the writing on the side of a truck, attempting to decipher the company name. They read slogans on each other's clothing and on car and bus trips leaned out of the window to read the signs on buildings, airplanes, stores, etc. At museums children read the pamphlets, and at theatres they read the tickets and billboards for coming attractions. In restaurants they read menus and signs. In stores they read product names and label messages. On the streets they read the walls of buildings. Often this became a kind of collaborative game, one child beginning to read and others joining in to finish the reading. Once a child began a reading game as we rode in the car, "Who can see something that says 'automobile'?" The game continued for almost twenty minutes with different children giving clues.

Often children formed their own after-school groups. For boys, this was frequently organized around sports, and the boys kept records of team members and positions on the team. Girls created a special group situation called "drill teams", usually informally organized neighborhood groups (although they could also be formally sponsored by churches, etc.) where girls of varying ages met to practice "cheers", the rhythmic chants mentioned in the previous section. Because of the intricacy of the cheers and the need to constantly learn and transmit new cheers, at least one member of the team would be responsible for writing down the "steps" to new cheers. The girls involved in the team, even if not necessarily doing the writing, were at least exposed in this manner to fundamental uses of literacy.

Modern media and advertising created important contexts for literacy use. One example will serve to illustrate this potential. During 1979, McDonald's hamburger restaurants distributed free calendar books to the children. The book was the size and shape of a calendar, the lower page devoted to the days of the month with special holidays marked in. The upper pages had pictures, questions and "Secret Messages from McDonald's." At the very bottom of the page were coupons for specific items on certain dates, with directions for where the coupon was to be presented. These calendars appeared at home and at school, and children adapted them to their own needs, marking important dates (birthdays, visits, etc.) and listing special information. Not only were the children involved with literacy, they were also getting practice with the use of a calendar. It is at least conceivable that younger children got their first experience actually using a calendar from this advertising gimmick.

(E) Suggestions for Classroom Applications

The home and community life of the children is rich in examples of both official and unofficial literacy. The church context (as well as Scouts, the public library and tutoring sessions) is markedly similar in many respects to the public school. Similarity extends to values espoused and certain styles of interaction associated with the learning situation. Clearly the public school model of learning goes beyond the walls of the classroom. It is impossible to decide whether this is due to the direct influence of the schools (since church leaders, scoutmasters, etc., were once students in classrooms or were still associated with the public school through their own children), or whether something inherent to the situation of teaching five or ten or twenty children requires a certain form of interaction.

Despite similarities there are important differences. One is the emphasis on memorization of Scriptures in Bible School, the intimate connection between written text and discourse and the importance of contextualizing information, relating what is read and studied to everyday life. A second is the relative lack of sustained silent reading in these contexts and the emphasis instead on group learning and collaboration. A third is the more frequent use of literacy as a means to an end, a means that can be replaced if necessary.

Official literacy environments in the community should perhaps be seen as variations on the theme of the school literacy context, resembling school to different degrees (the tutoring sessions being the closest imitation of the school, for example), and adapting literacy to differing needs and goals.

Unofficial literacy in the home and community, especially in terms of what I have labeled environmental literacy, is particularly rich. Children are surrounded by a variety of literacy objects and constantly encountered the use of reading and writing in varied forms. Environmental literacy clearly influences children in their attempts to read and write, in their efforts at imitation and play and in their growing awareness of the functions, uses and benefits of literacy.

In all the examples cited, the use of reading and writing in the community did not conflict in any fashion with the uses advocated by the school. Rather, it is as if community uses of literacy are simply extraneous to what is considered "literate" behavior. Even when the behaviors coincide, little attention is paid to community contexts. Thus, teachers might teach calendar lessons from texts, but generally ignored the resources for calendar use in the community. Reading material was supplied to children, while the material available in the environment was overlooked. In discussing uses of reading and writing, only school concepts of literacy use were stressed--reading for enjoyment, to develop thinking skills, writing for self-expression--while the more common and perhaps more functional uses of literacy (common in school as well as community) were bypassed.

The following are intended as tentative suggestions for how school and community may be able to begin to support each others efforts. As Heath (1980) states,". . . reading and writing need not be taught exclusively in the schools. ...learners frequently possess and display in out-of-school context skills relevant to using literacy which are not effectively exploited in school learning environments." Clearly the worth and feasibility of any of the ideas can only be evaluated by the teachers and school personnel involved.

School relationships to church and Sunday School are by legal necessity quite circumscribed. The school can recognize the power of religion in the children's lives, however, and perhaps capitalize on the interest and familiarity with the Bible as a text. For example, could the school allow the children to bring in books of Bible stories, to retell the stories in their own words (perhaps as a suggested topic for a composition), to relate experiences with religion or even to study about other religious customs (as kind of a social studies lesson)? The children's interest in and familiarity with religion seems almost a natural source of motivation which might be fruitfully used.

The Sunday School situation provides an opportunity for reinforcement of a variety of literacy skills. Sunday School teachers have expressed concern over the reading problems of their pupils. Would it be possible to have schools begin to work with Sunday School teachers, training them in some of the basic techniques for teaching and reinforcing vocabulary, helping children decode new words, working with reading comprehension, etc. Would Sunday School teachers accept as at least one small aspect of their role the responsibility for teaching some of the technological skills of literacy, so that, for example.

children are not only taught the meaning of "faith" or "deity", but are taught to read and spell the words as well. Clearly, Sunday Schools and public schools are in the position of being able to reinforce each others work. (In the course of my observation in one of the Sunday Schools, several teachers approached me to ask advice about working with children who were poor readers. There was a very genuine interest in taking on the responsibility for helping children learn to read and in learning from public school representatives.)

Attention to the variations in teaching practices in community literacy environments may provide fresh ideas and a new perspective for the public school classroom. For example, the emphasis in church and Sunday School on choral reading, singing of songs from the hymnal, and collaborative study, may be fruitfully applied in the classroom. One teacher involved in the study agreed to incorporate chorale reading of poems into her lessons and reported that the children were enthused and continually requested more of that activity.

The relationship between schools and scouting might be even more easily developed (without fear of overstepping legal guidelines). Teachers could allow/encourage students to bring scout manuals to school to practice their oaths or read and study sections of the manual for work on the Merit badges. The Scout Manual in many respects would make a fine reading or social studies text. The motivation of earning a merit badge might provide the incentive for reading that the basic reader lacks. In turn Scoutmasters could begin to see themselves as adjuncts to the school (as they likely do to some extent), helping children to acquire basic reading and writing skills.

There are numerous parallels of cooperation that could be established, schools and libraries, schools and tutors, schools and churches. The rewards of such cooperation would amply repay the efforts involved.

As to unofficial literacy, again there is a source of potential motivation and reinforcement that has barely been touched. First, schools could simply attend to the wealth of literacy material in the community, encouraging children to be aware of the extent to which they actually do read and write in their daily lives. The school curriculum might include units on literacy specifically, not just the technological skills of literacy (for which the school is well prepared), but teaching about literacy - who reads, what do they read, when do they read, for what reasons? In a sense this would simply be making conscious what the children already know intuitively. Lessons of this sort could begin with Kindergarten age children and continue with increasing sophistication through all grade levels.

Second, the school might begin to incorporate some of this literacy material into the classroom, encouraging the use of advertising calendars for example, doing lessons on advertising or street signs, perhaps even studying graffitti. Teachers very obviously would be the ones to suggest specific ideas for developing new lessons and curricula along these lines. Perhaps eventually (taking the freedom to be very Utopian), schools, businesses, advertising, and the media will begin to cooperate in efforts at literacy. Schools might advise companies like McDonald's about what type of advertising would most promote academic skills.

Third, in their efforts to "educate" parents to the importance of a "literate" environment, schools can begin to emphasize the importance of "literacy" environments as well, pointing out that a parent's attention to his child's first efforts to read "Kool Aid" may be just as important as periods of time spent reading with the child. Given the situation of working parents who may simply not have the time to sit and read with a child, the encouragement of this incidental interaction with literacy is very important. Simply the supplying of plenty of pencils, paper, notebooks, etc. to a child might foster the type of literacy play that seems to grow into a motivation to read and write. Thus, schools need to revise their concept of the literate environment, expanding it to include the literacy environment in which the children live. Basically, rather than continually trying to change the home environment, the school must attempt to capitalize on the potential for literacy development that already exists.

Fourth, schools must reassess their own environments to judge whether they encourage spontaneous literacy in their students. For example, are all classrooms full of paper and pencils, readily available to students for their playful writing efforts? Do teachers encourage literacy play, perhaps providing old typewriters, discarded official forms, etc. One third grade teacher mentioned setting up a play store for her students complete with a pad of order blanks. The students then began making signs for the store, posting prices and warnings, and filling out the order forms with lists of grocery items. This type of activity should be encouraged from kindergarten onward.

Independent of the feasibility of any single idea, I should like to offer the following major contentions:

(1) Schools must begin to realize the potential for literacy that already exists in the community.

(2) School and community literacy contexts have important opportunities to reinforce each others efforts.

(3) The concept of the "literate environment" should be expanded to include the "environmental literacy" that surrounds the children in their daily lives.

(4) Rather than only insisting upon the school model of the literate environment (books in the home, reading to children), schools should help parents use the literacy potential in their environment to motivate and interest children in reading and writing.

(5) Schools may profit from an examination of literacy use in the community and an awareness of the most common styles of interaction with reading and writing, e.g., chorale reading, collaborative study, etc.

(6) Formal community organizations involved with literacy should perhaps come to accept, as part of their responsibility, collaboration

with the school in teaching the technological skills of literacy.

(7) Schools must reassess their own literacy environments to see whether they truly encourage the use of and interaction with literacy in a way that is meaningful to the children.

VI. APPLICATIONS

A major goal of the research project was to discover how the findings of ethnographic research might be brought back to and applied in the classroom. In order to achieve this goal, frequent meetings were held with teachers to share observations, ask questions, try out hypotheses, etc. In addition to discussions with teachers participating in the project, interviews were held with teachers in grades 1-6 to discover their observations of and views about spontaneous writing. A brief overview of these interviews follows.

A. Teacher Interviews

In an effort to discover how widespread in grade levels were the various phenomena of unofficial writing, one or more teachers at grades one through six were interviewed. The following classes were included: high track first, high track second, middle track second, high track third, high track fourth, low track fourth, high track fifth, middle track fifth, middle track sixth, low track sixth. The interviews are described in detail in Appendix J; the main points are summarized here.

Teachers at all grade levels continued to make an implicit distinction between the things they labeled "writing" -- letters, poems, stories -- and those things that were simply not labeled or counted at all -- notes, signs, calendars, etc. Only when I directly mentioned these latter artifacts did teachers agree that they had seen children doing this type of writing.

It became clear from the interviews that developmental and skill factors clearly influenced the spontaneous use of writing in the classroom. Unofficial writing became more prevalent and more complex as children advanced in both the technological skills and the ideological conceptions of writing. It was necessary for children to reach a certain level of proficiency before being able to break out of the constraints of writing, e.g., it was not until children had mastered the constraints of printing or cursive that they could begin to freely "play" with letter design. As they gained experience with writing and came into contact with different forms of writing uses, children gradually adopted and adapted more complex formats and uses for writing--calendars, schedules, registration forms, etc.

The classroom environment itself could become an important factor in encouraging or discouraging unofficial writing. Primary teachers pointed out that their schedules were very full and there was often no paper available to the children for free writing. Teachers seemed concerned with the need to teach children to write properly, in the correct spaces, with the correct content. In discouraging free scribbling and drawing they often inadvertently stifled the child's ability to simply "play with" or experiment with writing. Several primary children found outlets for their writing needs by using the margins of coloring books or the corner of a worksheet.

The opposite of this situation was one in which teachers (again, often inadvertently) created environments which promoted the use of unofficial writing. One teacher set up a classroom store, and the children spontaneously filled the store with the correct literacy artifacts--signs, sales slips, etc. In contrast, she reported that a writing center she had established to intentionally foster writing, had little effect. It seemed that the establishment of a very natural context of writing (a store) was more successful in fostering literacy use than an artificial situation that depended on interesting topics for motivation. Thus, the framing context for writing was crucial.

Almost all teachers pointed out the dangers of homogeneous grouping (the "tracking" system used in the school) because of the absence of proper peer role models in the lower tracks. This explanation can be extended to the use of unofficial writing as well. In low track classrooms there were fewer proficient writers and thus fewer children to initiate the extensive use of writing apparent in high track classes.

Finally, teachers were very much aware of a contradiction between their need to encourage children to write and their desire to teach children to write correctly. They felt that an emphasis on correctness (while necessary and beneficial) often created a fear of writing in the children and squelched their desire to write. (cf. the concern of the teacher discussed by Woods-Elliott in the preceding report.)

The dialogue with teachers who were participants in the project went beyond interviews and gradually and eventually developed into a "What if" situation, where the ethnographer had the freedom to throw out suggestions and the teacher would veto or accept and agree to implement the suggestions. Fortunately, teachers were experienced and confident enough not to be threatened by this process. The willingness of certain teachers to try most suggestions and the competence and assurance with which they implemented new ideas provided invaluable data to the research.

Most of the suggestions centered around ways to bring "unofficial literacy" and the collaborative, participatory style of interaction into the classroom.

The first, and most important lesson to be learned from these efforts was that the transition was not easy and sometimes not feasible. In fact the effort implied something of a contradiction in terms. Unofficial literacy was, by definition, reading and writing performed spontaneously by the child, for his own purposes and as part of a context that had provided inherent motivation. To then ask the child to use this type of literacy in a situation structured and defined by the teacher or the school could destroy all the motivating force inherent in the previous situation. However, the situation was not all that bleak. Certain aspects of what had been learned from the observation of unofficial literacy could be brought into the official context of the classroom.

B. Types of Writing: The First "What if"

Given that unofficial writing was very often an imitation of the kinds of writing children saw in their environment, it seemed reasonable to ask children to write things that would be familiar to them from their neighborhood. The idea of writing advertisements for a store was hit upon, partly because the children would all be familiar with this type of writing and partly because the style of writing (in superlatives, with lots of self praise) might resemble the kinds of status writing done spontaneously by the children, especially by the boys. The end result of the assignment was that only about eight children (mostly girls, and all good "official" writers) understood the idea and were able to produce a good imitation of an ad. (See Appendix F for the examples.)

Children who did not understand the assignment seemed to have been confused by the new type of writing assignment and either tried to transform it into a more standard composition or developed a format that seemed to be a cross between a list and an ad (relying on advertisement words like "This week only" or "Save Now," but in list format). In many ways, children (especially older children) may be as confined as teachers by rigid ideas about school writing. When the assignment did not conform to notions of a "composition," the children simply changed and adjusted the format to more closely meet their conceptions.

A second example of bringing a type of unofficial writing into the classroom was instigated by a different teacher (and occurred previous to any discussion between us). As one idea to motivate writing, the teacher had asked her class to write captions for a very humorous picture on the wall. Captioning pictures was an activity children frequently did spontaneously; however, the teacher reported that only a few children had given her captions. After our discussion, she decided to try the captioning idea again, this time transforming it into a contest and allowing the class to vote for the three best captions. The results were quite different. Almost all children contributed a caption and several contributed handfuls of paper with their ideas. Subsequently, children asked to repeat the activity.

In this example, it was not the observation of the type of writing children did spontaneously (i.e., captions) that helped the teacher; it was rather the observation of the children's style of interaction with writing. When the writing assignment was turned into something that required participation and performance and provided recognition to the children, the level of motivation rose markedly.

I suggested to one teacher, whose class was extremely reluctant to write, and angry about any writing assignment, that she assign a letter, rather than a composition as a writing exercise. The suggestion was based on the observation that children spontaneously used writing as a means to transmit messages. The teacher reported, not that the children were enthusiastic over this writing exercise, but that they "didn't mind it as much." However, continued use of writing activities that would: (1) be seen as genuinely purposeful by the children, and (2) allow the children some means of display/recognition, might begin to break down classroom reluctance toward writing. (It is important to note that this teacher was one of the few who did not have children read their compositions aloud after they were written.)

That the motivation for writing come from a genuine need in the children (whether this be a need for communication, for performance, or for expressing social relationships) cannot be overemphasized. Often, creative writing exercises call on the teacher and the topic to motivate the students. The dangers of this approach can be seen in the following incident.

> The teacher told the children to put their heads down...As soon as the room grew quiet she began to pace up and down between the rows, talking as she walked. "Imagine you're in your house and you're sitting all by yourself on a carpet, just in the middle of your living room. Now imagine that suddenly you feel the carpet move under you. It moves a little more and you realize it's going up in the air, and it goes up and up and up..."
>
> Here, the children began to make oohing and aahing noises... They involved themselves physically in the story, gripping their desks, leaning against one another, murmering.
>
> The teacher continued with the story as the carpet finally landed with a "Plop!" As she said this, the children sat up and one girl muttered angrily, "Now she gonna make us write."

> Sure enough, the teacher said, "Give out the composition paper." As she said this there were groans, "Oh no!" and comments of anger, "I ain't gonna write." "I didn't have no 'magination carpet." "I didn't see nothing." Tammy folded her arms across her chest and banged her elbows on the desk. "How can I write if I wasn't going nowhere?"

Even an intriguing introduction to a writing lesson could not motivate the children when they viewed the writing itself as a meaningless exercise.

In addition to the observation of the need for genuine motivation to inspire children to write, the previous incident involving letter writing provided another important observation that deserves a brief digression.

As a follow up to the original composition of the letters, the teacher instructed the children to recopy their letters, stating that she had made only a few corrections because, overall, the work had been good. (This response was likely related to teachers' general feeling that too many corrections will discourage the child's writing--again the conflict between correctness and desire to write.) Jeannie asked me to check her letter for her and I poinced out that she has misspelled "by." She looked disgusted. "Teacher didn't even catch that." Moments later Trina asked me how to spell "except." When I told her she said, "The teacher didn't even change it" and also sounded angry. It was the children's expectation that the teacher would correct their mistakes, and when she did not they felt as if she had shirked her duty. Perhaps the desire for correctness was more prominent in this case because the children realized that the letters would be read by people who were important to them--relatives, friends, previous teachers, etc. Assumptions, therefore, about children's ability to accept correction may overlook, first of all, the children's expectations about the role of the teacher, and second, the context of the writing situation.

C. Interaction Structures for Literacy: The Second "What if"

Two ideas gleaned from observations of unofficial literacy were pertinent to the recommendations given to teachers. First was the observation of the children's need for some sort of performance or display of the writing/reading efforts. Second was the observation of the frequently collaborative nature of the reading and writing process.

(1) The Bulletin Board. One of the teachers agreed to set up a small bulletin board for the children and allowed them to post notices, to display their personal work and writing, to send messages to classmates, etc. The bulletin board was seen as a way to encourage more children to produce bits of unofficial literacy and to help transmit writing ideas from child to child and thus speed the normal process of writing diffusion. The result was a conglomeration of different kinds of writing: drawings and captions, a schedule, cartoons, part of a calendar, a set of small pictures of animals, an announcement, a play...However, interest in the bulletin board ended very quickly. Few new items appeared and children were observed reading the posted items only very infrequently for the first few weeks and then not at all. Two conclusions are possible. First, the idea of the bulletin board may have been somewhat strange to the children and perhaps they needed more encouragement to begin using it as their own Second, children's unofficial writing perhaps cannot easily be brought into the official context. Unofficial writing is done for specific reasons and in specific situations. In a sense, the unofficial writing is not intended to be displayed on bulletin boards at the front of the classroom. It is intended to be used by the child.

(2) Collaborative Reading. One of the simpiest and most successful of the suggestions was based on the observation that children enjoyed reading orally and in groups. "Old-fashioned" classrooms relied heavily on choral reading, a technique that has been ignored in recent years and criticized as overly regimented and noncreative. Still, the children's love for reading aloud, singing, and poetry, made choral reading a very natural choice as a pedagogical technique. One teacher who agreed to implement choral reading in the classroom reported that the children were highly enthusiastic and frequently brought in books of poems from the library to help the teacher choose a piece for the reading.

The techniques of choral reading could easily be applied to the standard reading group situation as well. Instead of continually relying on silent or individual oral reading, teachers might break the routine by allowing children to read passages and pages in unison. One teacher had herself used this technique quite successfully during whole group lessons with a low track class. Rather than reading to the class or having one child read (often a difficult and tortuous situation with poor readers), she invited the class to read the lesson along with her. Participation level was high and the teacher kept up a fluent and easy pace that "pulled" the children along.

In many ways, one of the most important conclusions to come out of this study, is that educators must break with the conception that reading must always be individual and usually silent. The style of reading interaction should be adapted to the needs and preference of the children.

(3) Collaborative Writing. By far, the most extensive and interesting of all the efforts was made by one teacher who agreed to allow her class to begin

writing collaboratively rather than silently and individually. The first attempts at collaboration were assigned by the teacher, who instructed the children to work together at tables. A variety of group structures and organizations resulted.

> I walked around the room and tried to get general impressions of what was happening. There was a lot of talk and a lot of attempts at organization. "You write two lines, then you write two lines, then you..." "Hey! It's my turn now." "You wrote too much already." Some of the children spent almost 15 or 20 minutes just trying to organize. By that time many of them had lost interest and were wandering around the room, drawing pictures, etc. There was much discussion about the stories, about what should happen next, dates, disagreement over details, etc., but not too much writing.
>
> Peter, Ricky, and Willard were working together. After 10-15 minutes they had only written the title of their play and the list of characters. Finally, they began to write, each boy taking a turn writing his own dialogue. Ricky got up and wandered around the room and spent most of the time away from the table.
>
> ...There didn't seem to be any good idea of how to go about collaborating. Some children did this by turning the work over to 1 or 2 people. Others had everyone take turns writing a section or a few lines. Some children entirely dropped out of the interaction.
>
> The only children who worked well were Vincent and two other boys. They began quickly, wrote intensely and with interest and continued writing long after the others were finished. They also seemed to have collaborated most genuinely. Although each took turns doing the actual writing, all gave suggestions and ideas.

A week or so later the teacher again tried a collaborative writing exercise, this time allowing children the option of working together or alone, and permitting them to choose their writing partners. Of approximately 30 children, 11 chose to work together and the rest alone. The amount of writing varied. Some of the children who worked alone wrote seriously and intently; others produced only a few lines. Of the children working together, some succeeded in the collaborative effort, but often one child monopolized the writing while the others talked and socialized. Conversations often centered around completely extraneous topics--t.v. shows, the Phillies game.

In a few cases however, the collaboration produced some moments of very thoughtful and critical writing.

> Willard began to write. Terrance told him, "Wait, put 'I was sitting on the...on the...'"
> Willard: "Dock"
> Terrance: "Beach, on the beach, cause then we gonna go back to the beach."...
> Terrance was writing now and wrote something like, "I recognized him." (This was a mystery story.) Willard corrected him." "You recognized his voice. You didn't see him yet. You got to move with the story. You just recognized his voice."

In general then, children were unable to cope with the situation of actual collaborative writing (i.e., one composition for a group of people.) Efforts were made to develop a kind of structure: one person wrote while others waited their turn; one person served as scribe while others dictated; one person interviewed the others. In only a few cases were children able to achieve more genuine discussion and collaboration.

It should also be stressed that certain children very pointedly preferred to work alone (and often these were the most prolific of classroom writers.) Of those who preferred to work together, opportunity for group work often resulted in socializing and play, rather than writing. For a few children, however, the collaborative situation might actually have led to more writing.

> Willard and Terrance got up to read their story aloud to the class ...The two boys sat down. Terrance said, "Want to write another one on the back." Willard replied, "I don't care." They began to write and continued quietly while the other children read their stories. The new story was called, "Mystery in the fog."

Several conclusions are suggested by these incidents. First, not all children prefer to write collaboratively. For some children writing truly is a solitary activity. Second, active collaboration may be too sophisticated and difficult a task for many of the children. Instead, perhaps allowing the children to discuss their individual writing efforts might be the more appropriate alternative. Third, the ability to discuss writing in progress (without being sidetracked onto other issues) is not necessarily a natural skill. If a participatory style of writing is truly desired, teachers might have to devote time to training children how to work together, how to critique writing, etc. Fourth, the importance of the performance aspects of writing should not be overlooked. For children the intensely private form of self expression (such as diaries) may have far less value than writing that enables them to achieve status in the eyes of classmates or to express feelings and ideas to others. At times, even children who had written intensely personal things (concerning abuse from parents or the taunts of classmates) would request to read these to the class. The demand for children to become involved with a private style of writing is often imposed from without and assumes motivations for writing not always present in the child. Fifth, and as a corollary to the above, the motivation for writing cannot come only from the topic and the efforts of the teacher, but must arise from the use of writing to meet a genuine need of the children. Ironically, lessons in "creative" writing assume that the desire for "self expresssion" will suffice to motivate the child to write. The need for writing to serve other (and more active) motivations, such as communication, performance, the establishment of social relationships, etc., has barely been considered. In essence, writing lessons attempt to provide interesting topics for writing, rather than interesting reasons to write.

(D) Ideas from a Teacher

I should like to report briefly some of the ideas attempted by one teacher as a natural result of her sensitivity toward the needs and interaction styles of the children. This is the same teacher who had allowed children to read chorally with her and who also frequently permitted them to work on assigned reading with partners. She had developed a highly aggressive, humorous, combattive style that permitted her to trade teases and insults with the class and allowed them to express anger and frustration to her, although there was never any doubt that she was in control. Her style was reminiscent in some ways of the kinds of banter that occurred in the community between adults and children, although there were obvious differences as well. (See report by Woods-Elliott.)

The teacher had worked with the children for several days on writing about themselves. One assignment entailed having children write down words that described how they felt about growing. "If you write the word growing and leave a lot of space I'll understand that you feel you have a lot of growing to do." The teacher later explained to me that she had noticed the children's interest in making designs from letters and words and wanted to encourage this in them.

The teacher's techniques in reading were often equally unorthodox but very successful. In her low track sixth grade class she supplied the children with mimeographed sheets containing ideas about teaching reading and her comments on and praise for members of the class.

> Why I love Teaching in 401
>
> David and Daniel immediately helped me when I broke the soda bottles. The dancers returned to their contest and no one was injured because of everyone's cooperation. Students shared

> their art projects for party decorations. Students shared their food. Students shared time for set up and clean up.
>
> The entire class completed a full days work in half a day by intense concentration, demanding effort, and forfeiting recess and lunch time. Leon promised cooperation and responded to my disappointment with superb understanding. Roland has put much more effort in his math. Sharila is the beautiful person I knew in 202--again! Donald took time and patience to create a poem and SUCCEEDED! Lester's on his way to dinner at Gino's." [This continued for 3 additional pages, praising individuals, groups, and the class as a whole.]

The children eagerly began to try to read these pages (which contained numerous words above their reading level), scanning for their own and classmates' names and deciphering the comments. Reading had taken on a very genuine meaning for them.

(E) Summary and Suggestions

The efforts made to bring unofficial literacy (both content and interaction style)into the classroom were not always successful but provided certain important lessons, further suggestions, and "what ifs".

(1) Attempts to bring unofficial literacy into the classroom may not only be difficult but may be paradoxical in certain ways. Once the teacher "assigns" the children to write or read, she has already removed the genuine motivating force that is the mark of unofficial literacy. A better way to approach and encourage unofficial literacy may be to set up a context that would naturally provoke reading and writing (e.g., the classroom store cited previously) and then simply allow the children to fill the context as they see fit.

The notion of simply assigning unofficial kinds of reading and writing may still be productive, however. What must be determined is whether children would consider certain kinds of writing and reading to be more fun (i.e., Is it more fun to write an advertisement for the teacher, than it is to wrote a composition?) or whether the assigned writing can serve a genuine purpose for the children.

Another observation to be emphasized is that children have certain motivations to write (or to write certain things), and this motivation should be tapped, rather than suppressed. If boys in the classroom prefer to write about sports and science fiction, they should be allowed to perfect these genres. (Many teachers already frequently permit children to choose their own writing topics, but there is still very much the belief that writing implies being "creative in different areas.") Ironically, texts and teachers expend a great deal of time and effort in trying to motivate children to write things they don't want to write and in preventing them from writing things they do want to write.

Aside from the issue of motivation, it is interesting to observe how fully indoctrinated children are in the proper forms of literacy in the classroom. They will twist and contort an unusual assignment to make it fit more closely with their conceptions of official literacy (for example the advertisement assignment). In other cases they lack the structure for dealing with literacy on anything but a solitary basis. Collaboration becomes an opportunity for social interaction rather than for writing or reading.

Thus, it isn't possible simply to change children's conceptions of what school literacy should be like. Because they behave a certain way in more natural and spontaneous situations does not mean that they will perceive this as the proper way to behave in the school context. It is not only teachers who perceive the features of reading and writing in a certain manner, but children as well.

(2) Observations of the interaction structures for literacy seem potentially productive for the classroom. Choral reading can be used as a supplementary activity or can be incorporated into the structure of normal reading group and textbook lessons. All that is required is for teachers to break with the tenets of the reading texts which continually stress the need for silent and solitary reading. This change may be especially important with poor readers who are neither able to handle silent reading nor able to listen to a single reader struggle painfully through a text.

Attempts at collaborative writing are more complex. Collaboration should perhaps be defined as allowing children to work on individual compositions but whenever desired consult with each other, share efforts, etc. Or perhaps the range of writing should simply be stretched and broadened to allow for a variety of writing situations. Before genuine collaboration can occur, children must be trained in how to work together without distraction or disruption. Most teachers choose to simply rely on other forms of participant structures (teacher-whole group; teacher-small group, students working independently) in an effort to avoid the potential disruptions that can occur in collaborative work. However, the importance for some children in working with others to complete a reading or writing effort may well outweigh the potential difficulties of such participant structures.

(3) The need for children to perform/share writing once the actual writing process is completed, has been observed over and over. Most teachers are aware of this need and allow time for sharing with the class. Perhaps the process can be improved upon and children be allowed to share their work in small groups, or at individual tables. Whether it is read aloud to the class

or not, writing should be displayed or used in some manner. The child must see some result of his effort beyond a brief teacher's comment. Textbook writers and curriculum developers must become aware the writing is not always private expression. Few adults write simply for their own satisfaction and few children in the classrooms observed did so either. Writing was instead a way to gain social status, to cement or sever relationships, to make feelings known to others, or just to "get a few laughs."

VII. SUMMARY

It has been the goal of this paper to demonstrate that the way in which we frame and study reading and writing must be broadened to include observations of actual literacy use by the group under study, independent of prior definitions and conceptions of what constitutes "literate" behavior. Too many studies have concentrated either on literacy use as directed by adults or spontaneous use of literacy of only certain sorts, i.e., studies of how children write stories, but not how they write lists or signs. Uses of literacy which adults ignore and overlook and which are not displayed for adult approval often provide clues to the concepts and meaning of literacy for the child.

Using writing as the primary source of data, I have attempted to observe all spontaneous uses of writing and to extract from the artifacts, the incidents, and the contexts, some insight into what children know about the features of print, the uses of writing, the functions that writing serves, and the interaction structures for literacy. The results of such observation were insights that have been both unconsidered and unexpected by more traditional views.

In unofficial writing, we seem to see children accepting and learning the conventions of the classroom with regard to the skills, forms, and the uses of writing. This learned behavior is combined with the knowledge about writing that children absorb from their environment and these acquisitions of competence are turned by the children to purposes of their own. It is in a small way the analogue of what the anthropologist and cultural historian A.L. Kroeber called 'stimulus diffusion' (Kroeber, 1940). Kroeber used writing as a major illustration of the way in which a society could learn a principle or idea from another and then implement it with materials of its own for purposes of its own.

The children in this study both learned (formally) and absorbed (informally) knowledge about writing which was put to specific use, use which could resemble that of adults, but whose underlying functions often seemed to differ. Thus, writing had "diffused" and become one of the tools that children used to do the kind of "work" that was necessary in their lives.

In considering the community as a literacy environment, I have stressed the importance of the church and the homes and neighborhood as facets of a literacy triangle: School________Church________Home/Neighborhood. Church literacy, while similar in certain respects to school literacy, has differences as well that may be important in understanding children's ability to relate to text. The homes and neighborhood, while often not considered "literate" environments by the schools, are "literacy" environments that could be capitalized on for purposes of teaching and motivation.

The"bottom line" of such a discussion is the meaning it has for the schools and the teaching of literacy. First, there is the potential importance in opening the eyes of educators to the literacy acts engaged in by children and to the clues that these acts provide for motivating and teaching children. Second, schools need to become aware of their own ability to foster or impede spontaneous literacy use (simply by scheduling, provision of materials, the creation of specific contexts, etc.). Third, teachers and curriculum developers, by observing spontaneous literacy uses, may realize that motivation for writing need not come only from interesting topics, but more importantly, from interesting reasons to write. Fourth, the view of the proper "literate" environment must be broadened to include the actual "literacy" environment in which the children live--a world full of signs, newspapers, magazines, labels, posters, etc. It is an environment that schools may well capitalize on in the classroom and parents in the homes.

My argument then is that researchers must shift from an examination of "official" literacy or literacy that "counts" to all uses of the written word. Such a shift opens up a panorama of literacy acts and events that illustrate how very much children learn and absorb about the written word and the creativity with which they then apply this knowledge. Clearly, the uses and functions to which children adapt literacy will vary from group to group and context to context. (I would not necessarily expect children on an isolated Indian Reservation to use writing in the same way that the children in this study did, although there may be some siliarities.) What is needed now is more research, in a variety of settings, into the ways that children spontaneously use reading and writing and the functions underlying this literacy use.

VIII. APPENDICES

(A) THE MEANING OF LITERACY

The conception of literacy characteristic of the United States and other "developed" countries is of a serious moral and cognitive pursuit, linked to intellectual and moral well-being (Malmquist 1973, Goodacre 1973). Our society judges as inferior the individual who fails to meet the high standards, and illiteracy is viewed with dread and somewhat hyperbolically compared to "disease". (Downing, 1973) The high value placed on literacy for both practical and symbolic reasons can be traced back to particular developments. George Steiner claims that "The existence of the book as a common, central fact of personal life depends on economic, material, educational preconditions which hardly pre-date the sixteenth century in western Europe ..." (1973: 146). Steiner relates the "bourgeois" concept of reading to purchasing power, the division of authority between educated and menials, and the development of a leisure caste. His concern is that the "classic" mode of reading--the solitary, exclusive, concentrated reading of the elite--is being undermined by a variety of modern forces and replaced by what Steiner labels "pseudo literacy", the kind of semi-attentive reading suitable to advertising and pulp novels.

David Olson (1977) traces the history of our modern concept of literacy from an opposite starting point, the development of the text rather than of the reader. Olson distinguishes written prose, "text", from oral, contextualized speech, "utterance". In "text" each statement theoretically contains its own presuppositions and assertions with no need for additional context and explication. The writer's task is to create this explicit meaning without shared context; the reader's task is to decipher it. Olson claims that the British essayist tradition was the first to exploit the highly explicit, decontextualized style of prose writing for formulating theoretical knowledge. Logically connected prose was used to present statements, derive implications, test the truth of the implications, and revise or generalize from the original statement. "Text" thus provided a means to deduce counter intuitive models of reality.

This view of prose writing as closely connected with logic and the empirical investigation of reality has obviously influenced our conception of what true, "full" literacy is and has likely shaped our style of interaction with the book. Compact, explicit, decontextualized, nonredundant prose requires the type of solitary, concentrated reading that Steiner describes.

Beyond the realization that our concept of literacy has been shaped in a certain manner, is the recognition of the underlying assumption in Steiner's terminology; certain things "count" as literacy ("full literacy"), and others, although they involve the written word, do not ("pseudo literacy").

Teaching children to distinguish between "text" and "utterance" begins early and includes the oral as well as written channel. Preliminary studies (Michaels, 1980) report how teachers use activities like "sharing time" or "show and tell" to teach small children how to focus on a single topic and present a series of coherent utterances that come to resemble a "text". The teacher orchestrates the development of this preliminary text by her questions, proddings and interruptions.

Although the modern conception of the purposes and manner of "full" literacy rests on premises and assumptions that are the product of a particular historical and cultural development, the patterns are so deeply engrained that we tend to consider our conceptions not as a literacy, but as the literacy. Both historical and anthropological evidence belie this assumption and present models of literacy that vary in at least three important ways: definition of literacy in the individual and the society; functions and uses of literacy; and consequences of literacy.

Definition of literacy in the individual and society

Historical studies have shown that reading was not always measured as a high level cognitive skill. In America of the 1830s the definition of reading was based on word recognition alone. "If the child gathers any knowledge from the book before him, beyond that of color, form, and position of the letters, it is to his own sagacity he is indebted for it, and not to his teacher." (quoted in Resnick and Resnick 1977: 380) Apparently the same definition applied in 18th century Sweden. "Of all those examined in one parish, only 10% read with passable to good comprehension; of those who read orally with 'achievement,' only 23% understood passably or better." (Graff, 1979: 271) Graff points out that a high societal level of literacy possession often was based on a low level of individual ability. 19th century educators deplored this habit of teaching children to read without meaning, yet it was not until the 20th century that literacy instruction came to stress comprehension and the ability to understand an unfamiliar text.

A further consideration that is rarely included in definitions of literacy is what Reder and Green (1979) term "technological" and "ideological" literacy. Technological literacy is the mastery of the requisite skills without the ideological orientation to use the written word. Ideological literacy is the lack of technical skills but orientation to the use of writing and the ability to employ others' literacy skills for ones own purposes. Olson (1977) refers to this orientation towards literacy as "literalization" and considers it a beginning stage of literacy development, an internalization of literacy consciousness and the conception of literacy as a tool. This distinction between technological and ideological literacy, between abstract skills and actual use, is especially important to this study.

Functions and Uses of Literacy

Writing is a tool and like all tools has certain inherent potentialities and limitations. A tool with a wide range of potentialities will suggest a wide range of functions and uses, limited only by the human imagination and shaped by the attitudes and needs of the culture. Thus, it is an error to assume that writing will be put to the same use in all cultures. Susan Philips (197) expresses this viewpoint succinctly:

> 1) Literacy can be viewed as one among many modes of communication used by members of any given society; 2) The use of literacy is related to the use of other modes of communication. How different modes are used relative to one another is determined in part by the inherent limitations and potentialities of different modes of communication. But the use of different modes is also related to the social organization, communicative needs, and language attitudes of different societies; 3) The uses of a literate mode of communication will thus vary within a given society, and also cross-culturally. (p. 371)

In recent years, anthropologists like Jack Goody have been engaged in ethnographies of reading and writing, attempts "to analyze in detail the uses made of writing [and reading] in a particular social setting, to approach the question from the standpoint not so much of the library scholar but of the field workers with experience of the concrete context of written communication." (Goody 1968: 4) Observation of reading and writing in actual social context soon raises questions about many of our most sacred assumptions about literacy, its functions and uses and values.

Cultures that have acquired writing have shaped it to a variety of purposes, many of which would be considered peripheral in our own society. For example, in North East Thailand the Buddhist monks used reading to memorize chants, the emphasis being on memory, not meaning, since the chants were written in an alien language. (Tambia 1968) Joshua Fishman refers to this form of literacy as "reading in parenthesis" (lecture notes, 1980) and notes that it is part of the religious training of certain ethnic groups. Jewish children are often taught to (read) and recite Hebrew prayers before they understand any of the language. In this (reading) the power of literacy resides in the word itself and not in any transmission of meaning--an incantation of sorts. A similar example from a vastly different culture is cited by Reder and Green (1979) in their study of Seal Bay, an Alaskan Eskimo fishing village where the villagers read the Church liturgy in Old Church Slavonic without fully understanding what they read, yet placed high value on the word and on its graphic representation.

Literacy has also not remained stable in its functions and uses even within a single culture. Jack Goody (1973) points out that in Ghana traditional Muslim literacy was restricted to religious uses (communications about God, magico-religious events). Literacy was a low status skill and rulers employed scribes to do their writing for them. The advent of colonial rule introduced new functions and values for literacy as it became associated with bureaucratic administration, advancement and material wealth. A new system of social stratification resulted, splitting the population into rural/urban. However within the span of a few generations literacy again changed radically in its values and functions. The new change was due to the over development of schools and overproduction of literate individuals for available jobs. As the functional aspects of literacy declined and there were too few jobs to make literacy worthwhile, parents became increasingly reluctant to send their children to school.

The dissemination of a writing system, then, does not ensure its use in a specific and universal manner. What is diffused is the general concept of writing and perhaps the technical skills. Each culture adapts this to its own needs and values. Alfred Kroeber (1940) describes this as "stimulus diffusion" or "idea diffusion". "It stimulus diffusion occurs in situations where a system or pattern as such encounters no resistence to its spread but where there are difficulties in regard to the transmission of the concrete content of the system. In this case it is the idea of the complex of system which is accepted, but it remains for the receiving culture to develop a new content." (p.344) Kroeber illustrates his concept by an example of the diffusion of writing, the invention of the Cherokee syllabary by John Gist (Sequoyah) in 1821. Having been exposed minimally to the concept of writing in English, Gist invented a new system for Cherokee, using the syllabic rather than the alphabetic principle, thus adopting the idea of writing but changing the content. Kroeber's concept of stimulus diffusion can be equally applied to the examples cited above in which the idea of writing was adopted but the uses and functions were redefined to meet varying cultural needs.

Consequences of Literacy

The third and perhaps most complex matter, the "consequences" of literacy can be considered from two perspectives, the social-cultural and the psychological.

Jack Goody and Ian Watt's seminal article "The Consequences of Literacy" (1963) stimulated an analysis of the social, economic and intellectual changes accompanying the advent of mass literacy. Among these was included the development of the idea of logic, the distinction between myth and history and a change in the categories of time and space, the development of democracy, alienation and cultural lag, social stratification, and stress on the individual and private thought.

Kathleen Gough (1968) refutes the inevitability of these consequences, pointing out that in countries such as China and India, literacy did not always have the results described by Goody and Watt. Gough's evidence and arguments are a trenchant rebuttal to the assumption of inevitable and universal literacy consequences. Obviously the uses to which a society chooses to put writing will determine the consequences. If writing is used solely for incantation or desert graffitti or love letters, it could hardly be expected to influence the development of syllogistic reasoning or a sense of history. Thus writing is an "enabler", not a "cause", allowing a culture to actualize certain historical trends and interacting with those trends to shape them further.

Proponents of the "psychological" approach to the consequences of literacy argue the effects of writing on the development of human thought processes. The basic argument is that the technologies available in a given culture determine the level and range of abilities in the members, and writing, as a technology, promotes certain cognitive abilities.

For example, Greenfield (1972) argues that oral speech is more context dependent than writing and that illiterate, (unschooled) children will be unable to separate their thinking from the specific context. The work of Scribner and Cole (1978) among the Vai in Africa has effectively dismantled arguments such as Greenfield's by distinguishing between the effects of schooling and literacy. Scribner and Cole found that certain abstract reasoning tasks were improved by schooling, but not literacy per se. The effects of literacy could be seen only in improved performance on tasks similar in structure to the specific demands of the literacy process itself. They thus refute the contention that literacy has certain universal general cognitive consequences, and stress instead that literacy is a "practice", a goal-directed sequence of activities using particular technologies and knowledge. If literacy does develop certain skills, these skills are specific to the abilities demanded by use of the particular script.

(B) "OFFICIAL" LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

The word "official" in the title is meant to emphasize the well-structured set of procedures, values, and beliefs surrounding the teaching of reading that extend beyond the sight word vs phonic debate to more or less general consensus about what reading is or at least should be. Text materials provide a likely starting point to study societal ideals about literacy, since they so explicitly express these ideals (regardless of implementation in the classroom). Obviously the statements of the text must be supplemented by information from teachers and observation of the actual reading practices in the classroom.

The school I observed relied mainly on a basal reading program: a series of graded textbooks (readers), accompanying work books, and teachers' manuals which provided directions for implementing and supplementing the reading lesson. In addition teachers used materials from SRA (Science Research Associates) and similar "kits"--large boxes containing a variety of cards with short reading selections and questions. These were designed to be worked on independently by the children. Material in the discussion below was taken from all of the above described materials and also from a booklet describing a reading plan being implemented in the school.

A particularly salient feature of the discussion of literacy in these materials was the broadness of the definition. The basal series billed itself as a "correlated language arts program" which united reading with speaking, listening, composition, spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation--in other words just about everything concerning communication. Reading and writing were (in theory at least) intimately linked with oral discourse (by no means a necessary linkage as evidenced by historical and comparative data) and when children failed as readers it was frequently the "language" environment of the home that was blamed. Even the most basic skills of decoding were considered part of this communication process, "As each new sound is introduced, the child hears, says, sees and writes it. As these activities reinforce each other, the child becomes aware of a dramatic increase in his ability to communicate."

Literacy was seen as more than a tool or a skill. The almost excessive praise of literacy lent it something of a mythical air. Literacy was the means to introduce children to "many of the important ideas and achievements of our time and of past time..." It would "develop his capacity for self expression." It "contributes to the joy of childhood and prepares for the requirements of the adult world." The goals of the reading program were to encourage "...a lifetime commitment to reading as a means to knowledge and entertainment."

Given these views, it is not difficult to understand that failure to reach a satisfactory level of literacy is viewed with dismay. The child has not only failed to learn to read and write, he has failed (at least according to the text) to reach his potential as a human being.

Because literacy can have various manifestations, it is necessary to look seriously at the goals for reading and writing in our own culture in order to understand what constitutes failure or illiteracy, what this implies, and why it is viewed so seriously.

The Structure of Reading

Children being taught to read learned more than a set of skills. They learned also when and where and why to read. According to the basal series, reading was divided into lessons, with each lesson further subdivided into areas such as: background, words to watch, guided reading, silent reading, discussion, writing, oral reading, composition, proofreading, and exercises in spelling, vocabulary or word study.

Three of the reading areas are of particular interest: silent reading, oral reading, and discussions skills. Silent reading was considered the end point of the reading process, "... it is the adult way of reading," the "major objective" of reading.

Oral reading, except in specialized cases, seemed to be considered either a lower level developmental step, a diagnostic tool, or a teaching tool for language. Oral reading was said to be important because children would absorb speech patterns from stories. (No supporting evidence was given for this statement.) "The disadvantaged child has a particular need to hear and absorb good speech patterns. The oral language he hears during the greater part of his day does not furnish good speech patterns." (In this sense reading was thought to be an instrument of socialization of the lower classes into mainstream language.)

The specialized cases for oral reading were poetry and "good prose". "Poems demand to be read aloud." and "Good prose demands to be read aloud just as good poetry does."

When oral reading was discussed, it was generally of a certain form; one person read while the others listened. Only at low levels was a different form suggested, "During the 1:2 program, the guide sometimes suggests group reading of stories." And even here, if the class was not having trouble with reading skills, "... you may wish to omit the oral reading of the story and go directly to a retelling activity..." Again, poetry was an exception. For poetry reading, a variety of oral reading structures was suggested.

According to the texts then, our culture, as reflected in our educational system, views silent reading as the goal of literacy (except for specialized forms such as poetry), but will tolerate oral reading for pedagogical purposes, motivation, and in order to change language patterns. When oral reading is employed, it is generally individual - one person reads to the group (again except for poetry and except at very low levels).

Discussion is considered "one of the high points of each lesson" and is tied to comprehension skills: main idea, recalling facts, reading for details, understanding relationships, making inferences, forming judgements... According to the manual the approach to reading and the discussion was based on "The Great Books Foundation discussion concepts."

There are four basic types of discussion questions:

(1) Factual-- "The words of the text are facts: nothing outside the text, no outside knowledge, is regarded as a fact for purposes of F questions in these discussion."*

(2) Interpretive--inference, reflective thinking, "As with F [factual] questions, no reference may be made to information not actually contained in the text--not even information with which all the students are familiar."*

(3) Stylistic--techniques of writing

(4) Evaluative--allow or require application of knowledge from other contexts

Two types of skills are described here; one requires the reader to ignore all past knowledge and experience in favor of the written word. The second requires the exact opposite, the placing of the written word into the context of what is already known. The first skill is an example of "decontextualization" (Scollon and Scollon 1979) and is essentially a "literate" skill. (It is difficult to imagine an oral culture which would require the listener to suspend all previous knowledge and understanding as he listened to a narrative.)

The contrast between contextualized and decontextualized reading presented an interesting dilemma and is worth at least a brief digression. As part of the SRA Reading for Understanding program, a placement test was given to start the child in the program. There were 100 items ranging from simple sentences to high level paragraphs, each to be completed by choosing among four alternatives.

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*Shirley Heath (personal communication) has pointed out the absurdity of these statements especially in light of studies of artificial intelligence which have demonstrated the need to program in an enormous number of background statements before the computer can answer even a simple inference question.

Questions require a mix of contextualized and decontextualized reading. For example, to answer the item:

> When he looked at his watch, he began to walk faster. He was afraid he would be ________________
>
> a. caught b. slow c. late d. on time

the child has to relate this to what he knows about watches, the value of being on time, etc. but he must not relate it to any other personal experiences he has had of situations where people would be fleeing pursuit and not want to be caught.

Another example:

> The two boys had played together for six years. They did not fight. They were ________________
>
> a. friends b. enemies c. boys d. cousins

Again, children must bring a good bit of information to this sentence, information about what it means to play together for years and not fight. However, they must know exactly where to cut off their personal context, which may have included situations of two cousins playing together exactly in the way described.

This delicate balance between the use of personal context and pure reliance on the text is the mark of an accomplished reader, or at least an accomplished test-taker in our society.

A main thrust of teaching efforts then must be to teach the child his relationship to the text--when he is expected to rely on the absolute value of the written word and when he is expected to bring his own context to the text.

A final word needs to be said about the place of literacy in the classroom. Children had to learn that reading was a "time-filler" and the sooner the child internalized this, the better off the classroom teacher would be. "Reading of library books should also fill any small intervals of time between activities..." "It is worth considerable effort on your part to help the children acquire the habit of using small segments of time in reading rather than in talking, banging desk lids, or running around." Thus, literacy and the proper socialization into literacy served important purposes for the teacher in terms of classroom management.

Official Literacy from the Text: Writing

Much of what has been said previously about reading can be applied to writing. Like reading, writing was valued not only as a tool, but also as an instrument of thought and as a "familiar and enjoyable act." (Examples and statements are taken from the basal reader, from SRA writing kits, and from workbook exercises.) While the interaction structure for teaching writing was not as highly formalized as that for reading, certain basic rules did apply. For instance, "The composition period itself should be a time of complete quiet." "During the composition period the child is simply expected to do the best he can by himself." Children were socialized into the understanding that writing is a solitary and silent activity.

In teaching composition, attempts were made to "motivate" the writing by relating it to the story read in the reader and prefacing it with discussion. In fact teachers were told to deliberately cut off discussion of a story before the children had a chance to express all that they might want. The assumption was that writing would then substitute for oral discourse as a means to self expression.

A paradox was set up between contextualization and decontextualization, much as occurred in reading. On the one hand, attempts were made to contextualize writing through reading and discussion, while on the other hand children were often required to write from the barest of cues. An example from the workbook, "On a separate sheet of paper write a paragraph that begins with one of these sentences: 'My complaining got me into trouble' or 'My complaining finally did some good.' Your paragraph should explain what you mean by your first sentence." While teachers were instructed, "If desirable discuss each topic and writing skill before students begin," this was left to their discretion. In another example, the workbook simply stated, "On a separate sheet of paper write a composition of one or two paragraphs. It should end with this sentence: I laughed for a long time afterword."

The teacher's manual actually set up a hierarchy of writing skills that could be interpreted as moving from most to least contextualized. Three levels of composition were mentioned.

(1) Those that deal with the student himself, self expression: These may be all that some students can manage but can lead to "narcissistic self-centeredness" and must be used sparingly.

(2) Those that apply what the student has read to the world around him: These encourage students to relate reading to life but may still be too self-centered and need careful guidance.

(3) Those that deal solely with reading selections themselves and require close analysis of text and careful inference: These are the most valuable and develop analytical and reflective powers.

Thus the good writer would not only have to write from a few simple cues provided by a text or by the teacher, but would also have to learn his proper relationship to writing, much as he did to reading. This relationship implies a development toward highly analytical literacy that is based mainly on the already existing text or written word.

The only exception to these requirements of writing is again the poem. Poetry, perhaps because of its position in our literature has been defined as a very special type of writing. "Encourage the better writers to write poetry from time to time, especially from the third grade on.. A poem is a very special kind of literacy product. It should not be written by someone who does not wish to write a poem." The statement is particularly interesting because other forms of writing, even "creative" or imaginative writing are not provided with the same escape clause.

Summary

According to text materials, literacy is viewed as a key to socialization, as an integral part of the thought process, as a facet of communication and a segment of language, and as a means of self expression on the one hand, but as a turning point from narcissistic self-centeredness to rationality and analysis on the other. Children are taught to read and write silently for the most part and to relate to literacy both as a means for self expression and enjoyment but also as a realm that is separate and to be treated separately from the rest of their lives. (Olson's concept of "text" as discussed in Appendix A applies here.) The modes of thought to be brought to reading and writing are highly specialized in many cases and might be somewhat alien to a child, especially the need to suspend the previous context and rely on what is in the text.

Official Literacy--The View from the Classroom

On first entering the classroom, one immediately realizes that this is a place for literacy, not solely because of the presence of books and desks and chalkboards, but also because of the proliferation of words on the walls of the room. The words are of several kinds: (1) slogans, such as "Sprinkle each day with love, work, play" or "Take off with reading." These slogans often concerned literacy directly; (2) labels--"our best work," "Emotions," "Systems of the body." (3) Children's school papers--compositions, poems, exercise papers. (4) "Reading material"--(by this I mean something that contained more substantive content) newspaper clippings, posters of Black personalities with a paragraph about the person underneath. (5) Literacy "cues"--charts of the alphabet, number system, letter sounds, calendars, maps...

The use of writing on the classroom walls seems to serve a number of purposes: decoration, memory aids, motivation for children (both in terms of slogans and in terms of putting the child's work on the board), exposure to certain terms and vocabulary. But some of what is put on classroom walls is not designed to be "read". At times posters are placed too high and the print is too small. At other times the reading level is too difficult or the script is archaic (e.g., the posting of a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence on the wall). Sometimes the same slogan or the same papers remain on the wall for almost an entire school year. It can only be surmised then that the use of these "words" is a sign of literacy and, without even being read, the words provide a graphic representation of the special nature of this room in relation to literacy.

The concern with literacy extends beyond wall decoration to the entire structure of the classroom and school. It is a structure based on a variety of tests which serve to "measure" and number literacy. The test most frequently mentioned is the California Achievement Test (CAT), a nationally normed exam given by the school once a year in February. On the basis of this test children are assigned percentile grades which determine their eligibility for Title I reading assistance. Only those who fall below the 49th percentile on the reading subtests may use any of the Title I texts, audiovisual aids, or may receive help from the Title I aids and from the Home-School Coordinator. Overall school CAT scores for the Philadelphia School District are published in the newspaper each year and it is a matter of pride when a school breaks the 50th percentile mark. The tests are of such great importance that after Christmas of each year teachers begin preparing the children for them. Preparation includes work with specific skills the children need and practice with the general format of the test, e.g., how to mark the answer sheets. For teachers, parents, and children, the CAT tests are a matter of concern. Parents and children are often acutely aware of scores, and teachers stress the importance of doing well to the class and express dismay if their children do poorly. In fact teachers often rate other teachers on how well a class does on the CAT scores. Interestingly, the CAT scores have no direct effect on the children other than determining Title I eligibility. They are not used for diagnostic purposes (teachers send the tests off to be scored and do not see the answers) and they are not used for "tracking" (the placement of children into homogenously grouped classes on the basis of reading ability). There are cases of children in the top track class doing very well in school who have done quite poorly on the CAT test.

The test which seems to have more direct effect on the children is an IRI (Informal Reading Inventory), generally administered by the reading teacher. This test determines initial placement in the classroom. There are also a series of "Criterion Referenced Tests" which measure performance on a set of subskill objectives such as prefixes and suffixes, compound words, blends, vowel sounds, comprehension, etc. It is these tests that determine a child's "level" and reading group. For example, children in level 8 or 9 would be placed in a fourth grade reader. Those in levels 10,11, 12 would be placed in a fifth grade reader. (An interesting side effect of this "level" system is that the numbering often fools parents, giving them a false sense of achievement. For example a fifth grade child reading on level 8 is actually below grade level, but this is not always made clear.)

An interesting dichotomy is established here. While the emphasis of the school basal reading program is on literacy as a communicative, thinking skill, in practice children are measured on the basis not of how well they handle this broad definition of literacy, but rather on how well they do on tests and isolated subskills. The reading teacher expressed this problem to me, stating that the basic school philosophy has been to see reading as a "sequence of skills".

The methods for teaching literacy skills are fairly well standardized in classrooms. Most reading instruction per se comes in the morning when teachers have their "reading groups". There are generally three groups consisting of about 10-12 children using the same reader and working on the same stories. Groups are formed according to scores on the Criterion Referenced Tests and technically once a child's level is written in his school folder, he cannot officially be moved back to a lower level (an interesting comment on the absolute power of the written word).

Teachers try to work individually with each reading group at least once a day for about 45 minutes. However in practice teachers may only be able to see 2 of the 3 reading groups each day, depending on their morning schedule and whether art, music, gym, etc. intervene.

During the reading group the teacher sits in one corner of the room with the children clustered around her, often in a circle. Children usually bring their chairs and books, etc. to the corner of the room indicated by the teacher. The sequence of activities for each story is established by the teacher's manual - background, vocabulary work, silent reading, comprehension check, oral reading, etc. Generally only 2 formats are used for the reading itself: all children read silently, or 1 child reads and others listen. During oral reading the teacher will allow each child to read one or several paragraphs and then call on the next child. The formality of participation during the reading group varies from teacher to teacher. Some teachers demand that children raise their hands to answer all questions; others allow children to call out. Generally questions can be answered in a few words or a short statement.

The questioning section of the lesson (labeled "discussion" in the teacher's manual) is used by the teachers to demonstrate the functions of reading. For example the teacher will direct the children that when they read the "factual selection" they are to "read closely to pick up information." If children miss questions they are sometimes told they "haven't read" the selection and must go back and reread, or the teacher might say, "Don't dare guess! Look at the paragraph." Thus the value of reading as a source of information is constantly emphasized.

In the upper grade classrooms the value of silent reading is stressed again and again. Teachers remind children frequently that they should not murmur as they read or vocalize the words in any manner. This seems to be a problem and teachers state that it is difficult to get children to read without murmuring to themselves. The value of silent reading is directly stressed to the children in statements like, "Janet, we read silently in here, not aloud."

From the structure of reading lessons, children might be expected to learn some of the following values: Reading is basically a silent, solitary activity. Oral reading is done individually and for brief periods to give each person a turn by himself and to allow the teacher to check on your reading. Reading is done to acquire information. If you haven't acquired the information, you haven't "read". A value that is expressed less frequently is that reading is a "performance" skill and one must learn to read with expression so that others can enjoy the reading. But this value was only observed in the lower grades and seemed quite secondary.

The reading group structure described is typical of four out of the five teachers observed. However, the fifth teacher showed striking differences that proved the rule by their very noticeable exception. This teacher relied on a variety of formats for oral reading. In one lesson she had the whole class read a paragraph and then an individual child read the same paragraph. In a second lesson she began to read, stopped, and asked the class if they wanted to read along with her. They then read together. Children were often given the opportunity of reading with a partner when independent reading was assigned, and children were often asked to "share" things they had read with the rest of the class. The teacher sometimes made up her own reading materials for the class, including her obervations on why she liked teaching them and where they were improving, and notes she had taken at a meeting about how to motivate children to read.

In most classrooms a second major context for reading activities was the work done independently by the children. This included spelling, grammar, and punctuation lessons (many of which were in the form of mimeographed worksheets or work from the board) and reading from the SRA kits. (The SRA kits are specifically sold as highly individualized programs which allow the child to work at his own level and own speed with no assistance from the teacher.) Many of the independent reading activities are "exercises", e.g., activities that require reading simply for the sake of reading and not for any other function. For example, the children might be given a paragraph with certain words removed and told to choose from among a group of words to fill in the blanks. This type of exercise is related solely to test-taking skills.

Writing is taught much less formally than reading and with more variation among teachers. Teachers rely to some degree on the reading program which suggests composition ideas to accompany stories. Generally composition activities are done with the class as a whole, the teacher providing a topic or allowing children to choose their own topic. While teachers felt that some of the children did better if they were allowed to write about favorite subjects like witches, dragons, if I had a million dollars..., they also agreed that writing required diversity, i.e., the child should be able to write on a variety of subjects. A major "problem" perceived was that certain of the children, boys especially, always wanted to write about the same topics -- sports, science fiction, etc. Insistence on a diversity of topics often had the adverse effect of squelching some very natural motivation. (This insistence is likely a phenomenon peculiar to educational settings, since it is doubtful that anyone would quibble with a modern writer's tendency to develop and perfect a particular genre.)

While attempts were made to motivate writing, there were some instances when assignments were given that were quite decontextualized. For example, the teacher might tell the children to write a composition containing the line, "It was safe inside my pocket" (with no advance discussion of the topic). At other times children were asked to write compositions containing their spelling words. The results were often somewhat bizarre. (See next page.) These are cases of writing as an empty "exercise."

Again, the paradox -- writing is viewed as a communicative, expressive, thinking skill, but much of the writing children are asked to do is purely mechanical. And even when not necessarily mechanical, it is "writing on command," a highly specialized skill of being able to turn out a written document at any time. This is a sophisticated form of literacy socialization and probably a necessary skill for schooling. (Some of the children, expecially high track girls,were particularly adept at this.) When children fail to achieve this skill, they are labeled uncreative. In speaking of her low track class, a primary teacher told me, "You'd think that all children at this age would be creative, but these children just can't write anything down." Another teacher, after being told by a child that she didn't know what to write about, replied, "Are you telling me that you don't have any imagination?"

Ironically, teachers themselves often rebelled against writing they considered meaningless or merely an exercise. In one conversation overheard in a lunchroom, a teacher commented disgustedly about having to fill out a form that required her to list her objectives for a class trip. She clearly [redacted] [redacted]

Grade 5th

November 7, 1978

The Master's Slipper

One day a master looked at his calendar and it was November 17, 1968. He didn't know nothing but his alphabet.

He always talked to his pet buzzard. Every night he would think he was in yonder with his lanteen and a dollar bill. He always loved silver slippers. Suddenly he began to quives. Then it began to blistery. Then his pet buzzard began to talk.

felt that this was an empty exercise. The teacher next to her laughed, "Oh, just put down you want to enrich their experiential background!"

Writing, like reading, is primarily a solitary activity, but teachers tolerate different degrees of interaction among the children. However, while the interaction is tolerated, it is almost never encouraged (except in the one classroom mentioned as an exception previously), and written work is essentially the product of the individual.

Reading and writing are not only subjects of instruction but are instruments for instruction in themselves. In contexts outside the reading and writing lesson they are often used for genuinely communicative purposes, e.g., reading the frames of a filmstrip in science, learning the words of a song in music, practicing a play in drama club. For the teacher, literacy serves some "covert" functions as well. For example, reading is a time filler. Children can be taught to "take out a book and read" when they have finished their work. Writing can serve as a cue to the class that a new activity is to begin. For example, the teacher entered the classroom where children were talking and laughing, putting away coats, etc., and began to write the date and the assignment on the board. Immediately the class quieted and children began to copy the work. Writing could also be a signal to the teacher that the children were ready to cooperate: "Table 3 is putting their name and date and heading on the paper and are nice and quiet." Writing could be an implicit threat, as when the class was noisy and the teacher walked to the board and wrote, "5 minutes" (the meaning of which was clearly understood by the class). And finally writing was used as a direct punishment : children were given sentences to write when they misbehaved. In some classes writing was used as a threat if children continued to call out during discussions. "Allan, let's get this straight. One person talks at a time. Don't talk while someone else talks. If you can't follow those rules we'll do a written assignment."

Summary.

Children in the classroom receive a number of messages about the value, function and structure of literacy, expressed directly and indirectly. How well they assimilate these messages may determine school success. Values include:

(1) Literacy is the most important skill to be acquired in school and much of what happens to you is determined by the numbers you achieve in literacy.

(2) Reading and writing are solitary, silent activities or are to become that as you mature.

(3) Literacy is part of the thinking process and the two cannot be separated. If you fail to acquire knowledge you haven't read, and if you don't learn to read you won't acquire knowledge. Most of the explicit instruction you get in thinking skills will be connected with literacy.

(4) You must maintain a very special relationship to the written text, bringing to it some past knowledge and information, but never allowing your presuppositions to be overly idiosyncratic.

(5) Literacy has a number of important functions and is vital for communication, thinking, and self expression. But you must be able to ignore these functions and learn to read and write without any other purpose than simply to exercise your skills.

(6) The performance aspects of literacy may be important as you are younger but lose their importance as you mature. As long as you understand what you read, performance is secondary.

These tenets of literacy likely seem self-evident, almost definitional, yet not only might they be alien to the conception of literacy in other cultures, but they are also relatively recent additions in our own society. As the chart below (taken from Mary Austin, 1973) illustrates, the meaning of and orientation towards literacy has changed in the history of our country, and teaching methods and emphases have adjusted to fit changing orientations.

UNITED STATES [489

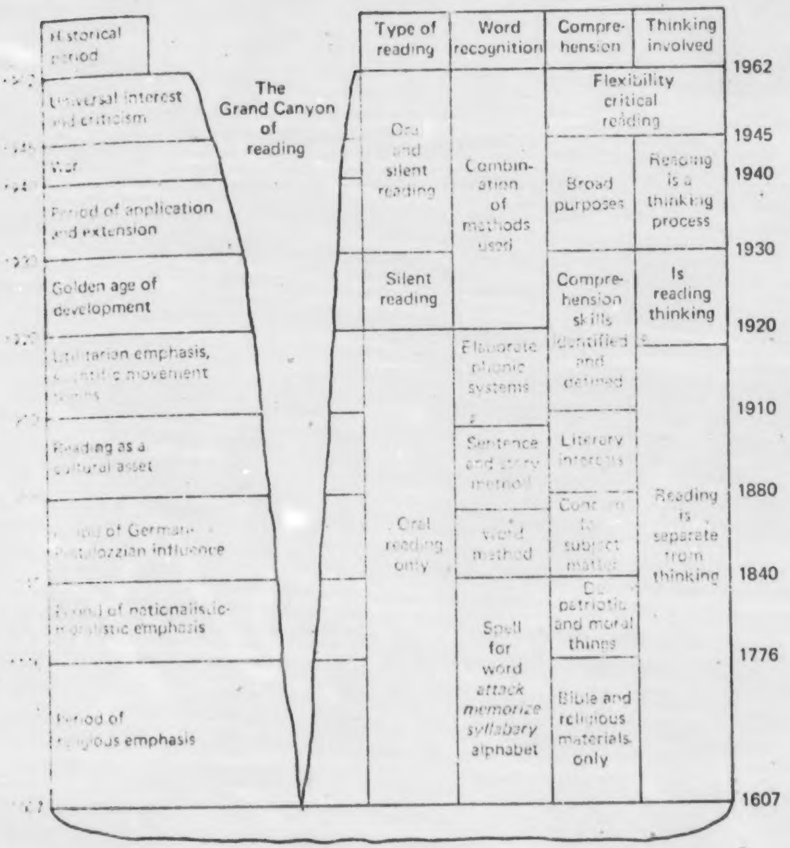

Historical period
Universal interest and criticism
War
Period of application and extension
Golden age of development
Utilitarian emphasis, scientific movement begins
Reading as a cultural asset
Period of German-Pestalozzian influence
Period of nationalistic-moralistic emphasis
Period of religious emphasis
The Grand Canyon of reading
Type of reading
Word recognition
Comprehension
Thinking involved
Oral and silent reading
Silent reading
Oral reading only
Combination of methods used
Elaborate phonic systems
Sentence and story method
Word method
Spell for word attack memorize syllabary alphabet
Flexibility critical reading
Broad purposes
Comprehension skills identified and defined
Literary interests
Content subject matter
Do patriotic and moral things
Bible and religious materials only
Reading is a thinking process
Is reading thinking
Reading is separate from thinking
1962
1945
1940
1930
1920
1910
1880
1840
1776
1607

FIGURE 23-1. American reading instruction: a historical cross-section. (After Ralph Staiger, "The Geology of Reading," in John Downing and A. L. Brown, Eds., *The Second International Reading Symposium*, London: Cassell, 1967.)

It is obvious at a glance that literacy (at least the teaching of literacy) has not always been correlated with either silent reading or with thinking processes. One might surmise that neither has the notion of literacy always been linked with cultural "advantage" or "disadvantage", with "reading readiness", with language skills, with "parental guidance", etc. as it is today.

(C) LITERACY AS A FORCE

The Russian psychologist Vygotsky argued that "written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning. Even its minimal development requires a high level of abstraction." Vygotsky suggested further that the child "...has little motivation to learn writing when we begin to teach it. He feels no need for it and has only a vague idea of its usefulness... The motives for writing are more abstract, more intellectualized, further removed from immediate needs." (1962, p. 98-99)

While Vygotsky's contention may be correct at some levels, other perspectives can also be adopted. The children I've observed were immersed in literacy of certain sorts--signs, posters, labels, Bibles, religious pamphlets, placards, advertisements, comics, newspapers, books... A list of the items children claimed to read would stretch for pages and include everything from want ads and obituaries to "filthy" books, labels, walls, clothes, name tags, lips... Lists of things they wrote, while not as numerous and often more school-oriented, were still impressively abundant. (George Steiner labels the type of literacy I refer to here as "pseudo literacy" in contrast to more classical literacy that involves long periods of silent and solitary contemplation of a book.) While perhaps not the ideal of what schools considered to be a literate environment, the children's milieu must be seen as an important force, establishing a standard where writing and reading were accepted and commonplace tools. The nature of the environment comes into focus when contrasted with other environments; for example, many Indian reservations in our own country have a far sparser backdrop of reading and writing.

Literacy as a "force" in the children's lives must be considered. While not always sure of what reading and writing were about, kindergarten children were very aware of their passage into literacy, realizing that their main purpose in school was to learn to read and write. They chorused excitedly in response to questions about what they knew how to write. Even the very paraphernelia of writing were important symbols to them. L.J., a small boy I observed as he was just beginning school, spent many months enraptured with his literacy tools. Each day he came down the stairs, seriously clutching a plastic briefcase that contained the same items every day--1 pencil, 1 scissors, 1 brand new jar of school paste, and 1 standard school notebook with his name and address neatly penciled inside by his mother. He carried these items with him for months although he never actually used them.

As the children got older they engaged themselves with writing in different fashions. Even in the low tracks, where children might be reading on first and second grade levels, teachers remarked on how children would simply copy from books. "If they can't read they will turn to writing down the words." Copying was a kind of "phantom performance" of writing; a way to participate in literacy.

> Richard came over and asked me for help writing his book report. Richard is a very bright child, but almost a non-reader. I

> helped him with the title and heading. Then he began to copy the story from the book. I tried to stop him and asked him if he had read the book; he said he hadn't. I explained that a book report is a summary and he should read the story before he wrote the report. Richard just shook his head, insisted he wanted to write the book report, and continued to copy the first page verbatim.

In this case, a child who was likely unable to read the book, was still insistent about participating in one of the major classroom literacy events--book reports--and insisted upon performing the outward steps of doing a book report.

Children also demonstrated an ideological conception of literacy, an understanding of writing and its uses, without actually engaging in the writing themselves. There were two kinds of examples of this type of writing use in my data. First, was the frequent situation of children using already created literacy products for their own purposes. The child who gave me the buttons, "Listen to my ideas," was one such case. Children also often used stickers, pasted to notebooks, books, and even desks, to convey information about themselves: "I'm from Flyers' Country," "God Bless the Flyers." Sometimes the sticker in itself became an object of interest. One boy's desk was plastered with stickers like, "Reserved," "Be my Valentine," "Eagles," each one from a different source--friends, the teacher, a brother, etc.

The second, very interesting case of ideological literacy use occurred in one of the low track classrooms.

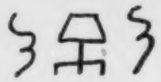
> Jennie came over to me while the teacher was getting ready to show a film. She said, "Come over here. I want you to write something for me." We went to the back alcove and she began to dictate:
>
> My handwriting is good
> It will stay like it should
> When I leave from school
> I will make sure

> It's more
> To be a new kind
> To show is shine."
>
> She hesitated at different points to think of the next line. I finished writing and handed her the paper. She read it over and handed it back to me.

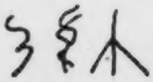
A few weeks later, Jennie asked me for "that thing I wrote" for her. I found the poem in my notebook. She asked me if I could copy it over for her on a clean sheet. I did so. She read it, put in some missing punctuation, and said, "Thank you. I'm gonna show my mommy." She folded the paper carefully and put it in her notebook.

What should be stated very boldly is that there was not a child in any classroom I've observed who did not spontaneously use writing, even if that writing was a graffitti name, a slogan, something copied from a book, or something dictated to a teacher. I am not arguing that this kind of writing should be considered equal to official literacy--stories, poems, compositions, etc., but only that it was a very real demonstration of the power of writing in the lives of children, some of whom were basically illiterate, at least in the official sense.

One final and remarkable example came from an incident that occurred quite by chance. The teacher of a classroom no longer being observed mentioned a new child in the class who "wrote" with strange symbols and could not read at all. The boy, Terry, had come recently from Panama. Ms. Martin, the teacher, said that Terry claimed to speak Spanish and had been in a bilingual school but was moved out because of his parent's wishes. I went over to talk with Terry. He spoke good English with no trace of a Spanish accent, but perhaps a slight lilt, reminiscent of a Creole speaker. Although he claimed to speak Spanish, he couldn't or wouldn't say anything in Spanish for me. The teacher told Terry to go to the board and write "school" in Spanish. He stood for a moment as if puzzled, holding a pencil and a piece of chalk. He raised his hand, dropped it, raised it again as if to write and realized he was holding the pencil. He shook his head and took up the piece of chalk, saying "escuela" over and over. He wrote:

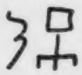


Ms. Martin then told him to write his name. He muttered "Terry Winslow" and wrote:



(The first, third and fourth symbols were identical. The second and sixth were quite clear and definite distinct symbols. The fifth had begun like number 1, 3, and 4 but ended as a scribble.)

Months later I returned to observe Terry and again sat down to talk with him.

> I asked Terry if he remembered me from a few months ago. He seemed puzzled but then said, "You asked me to write on the board," which was correct....I asked him if he would write some words for me. He wrote "me, we, no, to" and his name, and then said that was all that he could write. Then I asked if he remembered how to write the way he used to. He said no. I made a few of the symbols:
>
> 
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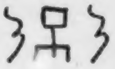
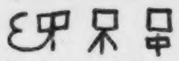
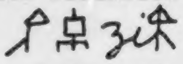
> 
>
> and asked Terry to tell me what they were. He said that one set was "agua" and the other was "pantalon," "pants in Spanish." I wrote down a third set and Terry said it didn't say anything and then completed one of the symbols. He finally wrote down a set of symbols for me which resembled cursive writing in spots:
>
> 
>
> 
>
> and said that this was "yo," "myself, me." He said that the symbols "look funny now."
>
> I questioned Terry a bit more about his background. He said he had not gone to school in Panama, but "when I was small I played and that's the language I learned."

Terry seems to have developed on his own a set of symbols that he considered writing and would use if called on to write. He used these symbols only for Spanish words and would not try to use them for writing English. As he gradually learned in school to read and write he realized that his original symbols "looked funny," but still considered them a form of writing. The symbols had no consistent relation to speech and likely were a kind of idiosyncratic "sign" of writing. The situation is extreme, but in its extremity elucidates the point to be made: because of their environment, children are bound, driven, compelled to engage in writing, even if in the most primitive and rudimentary manner.

(D) DATA COLLECTION

During the course of my work I observed approximately 182 incidents of unofficial writing in the classroom. This number is not intended as an accurate representation of how much spontaneous writing goes on in classrooms. My goal was not to count the total number of unofficial writing incidents per class or per day, but rather to document an accurate cross-section of the types of writing that do occur spontaneously and to begin preliminary analysis of the meanings they have. I attempted to ensure an accurate sample of data by observing on a schedule that allowed me to see a variety of classroom situations. I visited each class between one to two half days each week (two classrooms were generally observed during any one week) and adjusted my visits to be present for both morning and afternoon classes and on different days of the week. My own observations were supplemented by observations from a second school in the area, supplied by Ave Davis, who had also been doing ethnographic research, and by reports from teachers.

When I began the study, I was unaware of the prevalence of writing undertaken spontaneously by the children and of the contrast between writing that was directed by the teacher and writing that was not. As my focus evolved I began to catch a glimpse of more and more of these unofficial incidents. Sometimes the children volunteered the evidence.

> The children were told to get ready to pass to gym. Ronald came up to me and indicated some papers in his pocket. "See these. These are the evidence. I stole these love notes and have all the evidence right here."
>
> I asked what the notes were about. "Marsha wrote one to Tod that said, 'Your love is worth everything in the world to me.' And Rina wrote one to him (indicating Terrance) that said, "Will you be my boyfriend? Yes or no?"
>
> Terrance was standing by us and said, "But I just ignored it."
>
> Ronald said, "Yeah, he didn't want to get involved in that mess."
>
> Later Ronald told me he was stealing the notes because he "got turned down in a little love affair with a girl in another room."

Sometimes the children at first hid the writing from me:

> George was writing some kind of a note on a piece of paper. When I went over to look at it he covered it and said, "I can't let you see it; it's a 'bust,' talking about somebody in the class."

Often I observed the children in the process of doing the writing:

> Kevin had some papers on his desk and asked the other boys if they wanted some. Both said yes enthusiastically. I went over to look. Kevin had taken a piece of line paper and had drawn columns for "name" and the days of the week. He said, "I put down kids' names and then I mark stars and grades and stuff." He spent the next 10 minutes preparing some sheets for the other two boys.

And sometimes only the artifact itself was observable:

> When I entered the class at about 12:30, the teacher and the children had gone down to the lunchroom and the room was empty. I noticed on Tricia's desk a sheaf of papers stapled together. On the first was a "schedule" and some "rules".
>
> Monday-Music
> Tuesday-Art
> Wednesday-Gym
> Thursday-Science
> Friday-Science
>
> Rules
>
> No talk in classrooms
> No eating in class
> No writing in class
>
> Later Tricia told me that these were her rules for what she should do to be good.

Once the focus of the study was made clear, teachers also cooperated by saving bits of writing that the children had done:

> Miss Martin walked into the classroom for just a moment and handed me two sheets of paper. One was a note from Deanna to the teacher, "Miss Martin, Can Sarina and I sit together if we don't talk. Say yes or no. Circle one."

or related incidents that they'd observed:

> Mrs. Anderson told me about Kendra having gone to the board and written, "Today is February 29. Pearl Harbor Day. Attention Ladies - All Ladies should grab a man." Mrs. Anderson laughed and said she'd explained to Kendra that she meant Leap Year.

As the focus on unofficial writing evolved, it became necessary to develop criteria for counting instances as examples of spontaneous and unofficial writing. The major, definitive criterion was that the child engaged in the activity spontaneously with no adult direction. Under this broad rubric fall a number of subsets:

(1) The child engaged in some type of entirely self-motivated writing, under no apparent and immediate direction from the teacher. For example, children often passed notes during class and at times attempted to keep this activity secret from the adults in the room.

(2) The initial activity was initiated by a teacher or adult, but children subsequently adopted the activity and began to initiate it on their own. For example, I asked one child if she would like to take notes for me in my notebook. Other children immediately requested the same opportunity and continued to make this request for several months thereafter. These subsequent and spontaneous requests were counted as unofficial writing.

(3) The teacher set up a context for official literacy and the children went beyond the constraints of the context and included some instances of unofficial writing. For example, at the end of official compositions children would sometimes include an unofficial note: "I love you Mrs. Brown," "Boogie Fever, Boogie down."

(4) The teacher/adult provided an indirect impetus for the writing, either by serving as a role model or by the establishment of a particular environment. For example, children frequently imitated teachers' custom of writing names on the board to indicate punishment. And, in one classroom, after the teacher had set up a class "store," the children spontaneously filled the store with appropriate signs.

Thus, the following four subsets of unofficial writing can be summarized:

- writing initiated by the child without any immediate and apparent adult influence
- initial activity suggested/directed by adult, subsequent activities spontaneous
- official context for writing established by teacher; children add on their own spontaneous writing
- impetus indirectly supplied by the teacher as a role model or by her use of the classroom environment.

In order to count distinct instances of unofficial writing, I relied on two criteria: initiation by the child, and sameness or differences of genre and context within which it occurred.

(1) When a child initiated an unofficial writing event, this sometimes provoked a related activity from another child. For example, one child showed a word game to a second child, the second child demonstrated to a third, and the third to a fourth. I counted these as three separate examples of unofficial writing, because the change of actor had involved a new initiative on the part of the second and third child. In contrast, when a group of three or four children played a word game like hangman, I counted this

as only a single instance of unofficial literacy because the actors had participated in only a single initiation of literacy.

(2) Sometimes a single child repeated the same writing activity. For example, one girl made about 20 "aplacation" forms for her homework club over the course of a day. Given the relatively circumscribed time span, and the constancy of actor and genre, it seemed most appropriate to count all 20 instances as manifestations of a single initiation of activity on the part of the child, a single incident of unofficial iteracy. Had either the context changed (for example if a week later the child had begun to make application forms for a different activity--a show, perhaps) or had the genre changed (if the child began to make homework sheets for her club), the incidents would have been counted as separate instances of unofficial literacy.

In summary then, an incident of unoffial writing can be seen as the initiation of an act of writing by a particular individual as part of a single event.

(E) TYPES OF UNOFFICIAL WRITING OBSERVED

Genre	(number)	Context	Medium
notes/letters	(15)	5 to teacher 7 to other children 1 to observer 1 to family 1 attached to desk	14 on paper 1 on index cards
songs/poems	(12)	9 original poems written by child 1 poem dictated to observer 1 song copied 1 street rhyme written down (3) of above given to teacher)	paper and constr. paper
Writing notes for ethnog.	(8)	1 while ethnog. not in class 7 while ethnog. in class (child request)	notebook/paper
Lists	(13)	2 attendance/grade lists 4 punishment ("talking" "no recess") 4 record keeping (team members, props for show) 3 info. about self (lists of friends, teachers, etc.)	3 on board 2 notebook covers 8 paper
Word games (hangman, word search, etc.)	(8)	2 played by group 3 made up by child at desk 3 (1 child showed game to 2 others who passed it on)	paper blackboard
Name Writing	(13)	7 attached to desk in sign fashion 6 written on scraps of paper (doodling)	11 paper 1 on coin 1 etch-a-sketch
Signs	(2)	1 on desk ("Don't disturb...) 1 held in air ("We want...)	paper/constr. paper
Story	(1)	"Bustin" story about another child	paper
Announcements	(5)	2 concern seating changes 1 about Leap Year 1 about joining club 1 about Christmas celebration	2 board 3 paper
Cartoons	(4)	Child draws at desk--shows others	paper

Dates	(3)	Written by child sometime during day--usually during break	board
"picture" words	(2)	1 word game 1 drawn in journal	paper
diary	(1)	Boy read aloud from girl's diary	diary
booklets	(2)	1 insulting other child 1 "interview"	paper
handwriting samples	(4)	2 children try write backward 2 compare handwriting	paper
labels/captions/ messages	(45)	25 messages ("I love you Mrs. B.")	21 on paper 3 on board 1 on journal cover
		12 captions (under pictures)	9 on paper 2 constr. paper 1 hand
		8 labels ("This cup belongs ...")	3 journal covers 2 paper 1 tennis ball 1 book 1 cup
status writing	(15)	written mostly by boys ("I'm the best," "Lover of the World.") Displayed on child's property	1 paper 10 journal cover 1 notecard 1 tape 2 stickers
taboo writing (walls, chairs, etc.	(2)	Writing names	1 on chairs 1 on walls
Imitation of Official Artifacts	(23)	2 worksheets 8 access documents (passes, tickets, etc.) 4 schedules 2 record of information (chart of favorite colors, etc.) 4 calendars 3 address books	paper cardboard official forms
Miscellaneous	(4)	3 phrases/sent./words (written in margins or scraps of paper) 1 writing rules	3 paper 1 on constr. paper cut out in shape of leaves

(F) WORK SAMPLES

It Ran for forty

Look fish
how fish
mani fish
times fish
I fish
made fish
this fish
fool fosh
write fish
fish fish

Interview
Book

Hello My name is [illegible]
We are talking about Water resources.
Some children in my Class room are talking about how they are using water. The water resources tells you how much water we use a year.

Thank You

Hello Agin

I am here to tell you how the boys act in my class. When a group of boys get together they start to talk and when the teacher ack them who is talking they say nobody. We are having a contest with our class against the boys,
I think the girls are going to win.

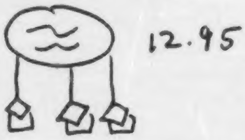
Thank You.

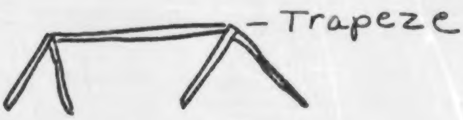
(Advertising Assignment) H-137

ALLISON'S BARGAIN GALORE

Come to my bargain galore you name it you got it for a SENSATIONAL FANTASTIC bargain. Come now it's a UNBELIEVABLE bargain.

Say if you dying for a table and it cost $99.99 and you only have 50.00 you come to me and I take it for only $12.95 and I'll give a free purchase of a new diamond table isn't that a Incredible job! You've got to come before 5 next months of course it's a unequel long lasting incredible sensational fantastic unbelievable Super-Duper Bargain Galore!



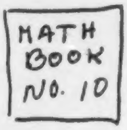


YEARLY BASH

I have books, I have Paper, and I have Experience. Come to Monica's Yearly Bash. See my Great Super Duper Books on sale now.

COME NOW!!!

This is your chance.



Children who didn't understand assignment:

Yearly Bash

I like History that is my fariote subject I study at home most of the time, and some times at school. But yet I still get Cs at it. . .

THIS WEEK ONLY

This week only is the week we had twenty word
This week only sentence Mon.-Fri.
This week only definition ends Friday
This week only write each word three times
This week only . . .

ANDREW SAVE NOW

1. Save my papers
2. Save my mathpapers
3. Save math books when the teacher
4. Save pencils
5. Save things that the teacher give you.
6. Save money for college.

(G) Data on Unofficial Writing from Other Schools

Researchers in other schools have related incidents that corroborate many of the impressions of unofficial literacy that I have presented. In one case, the researcher, Ave Davis, has supplied me with actual samples of writing found in one of the classrooms in her school. The examples are remarkably similar to the ones seen in the Commodore school and include the following:

(1) Special handwriting styles and status remarks:

(2) Notes and letters

(3) Poems

(4) Games

(5) Yes or no messages

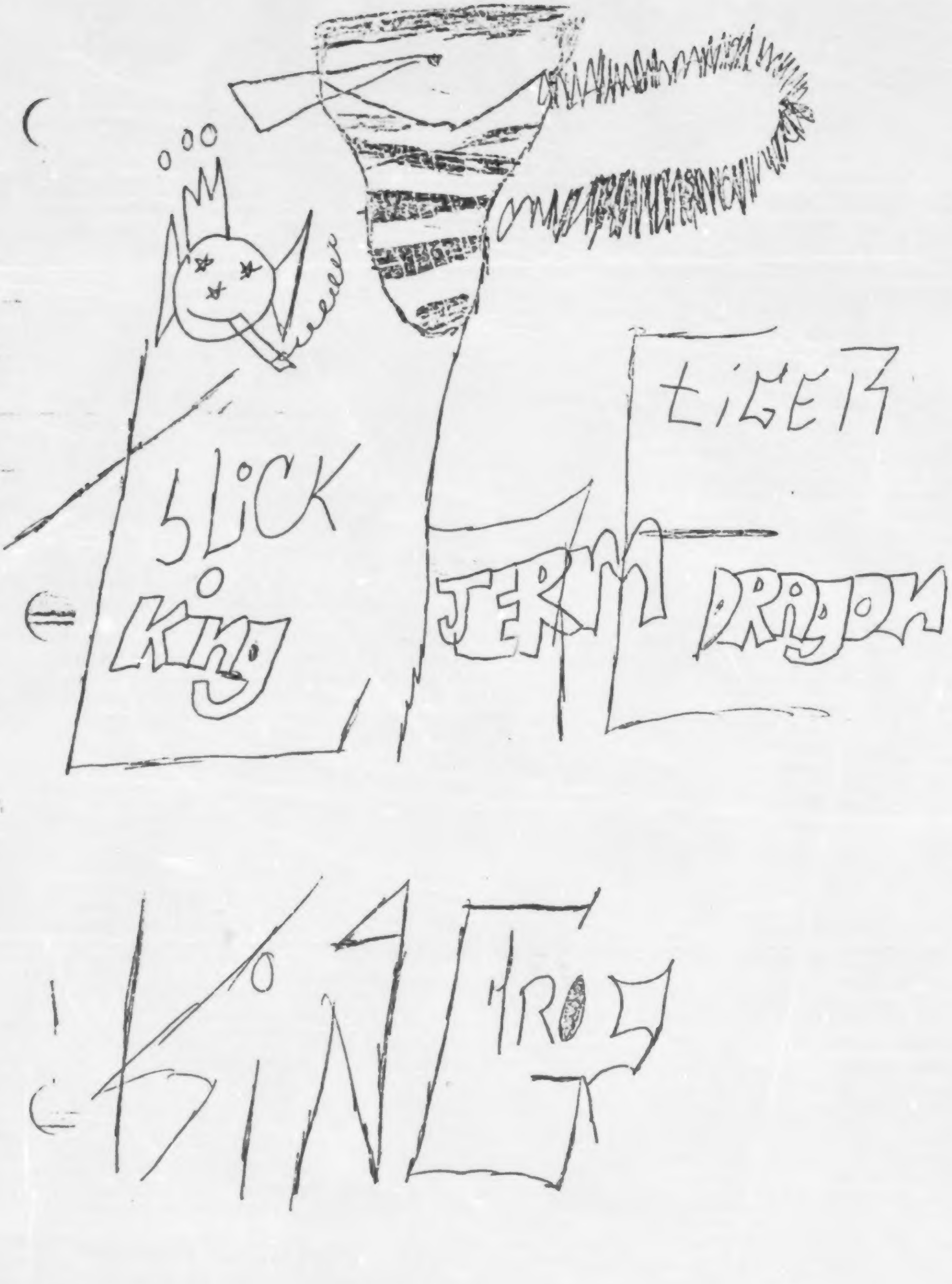
(6) Lists

(7) Writing gifts to the teacher

(see the following pages for examples)

Thus, it is apparent that the type of writing observed in this study is not localized in a single classroom or a single school. How widespread this writing is across different communitites and groups remains to be explored.

H-139


SLICK
King
JERM
TIGER
DRAGON
KING
FROG

H-140

They don't believe that we are cousins because my uncle is Uncle Jessie and if your father has a brother he might be dead
or write back

We are cousins because Uncle Jessie your uncle is my father right

Right

DID YOU SAY you were NOT FEELING COMING YES or NO

Ask Write back

Classmate

RP 2 C.

~~J.S~~ ~~[illegible]~~

~~I.A.~~ ~~AY~~

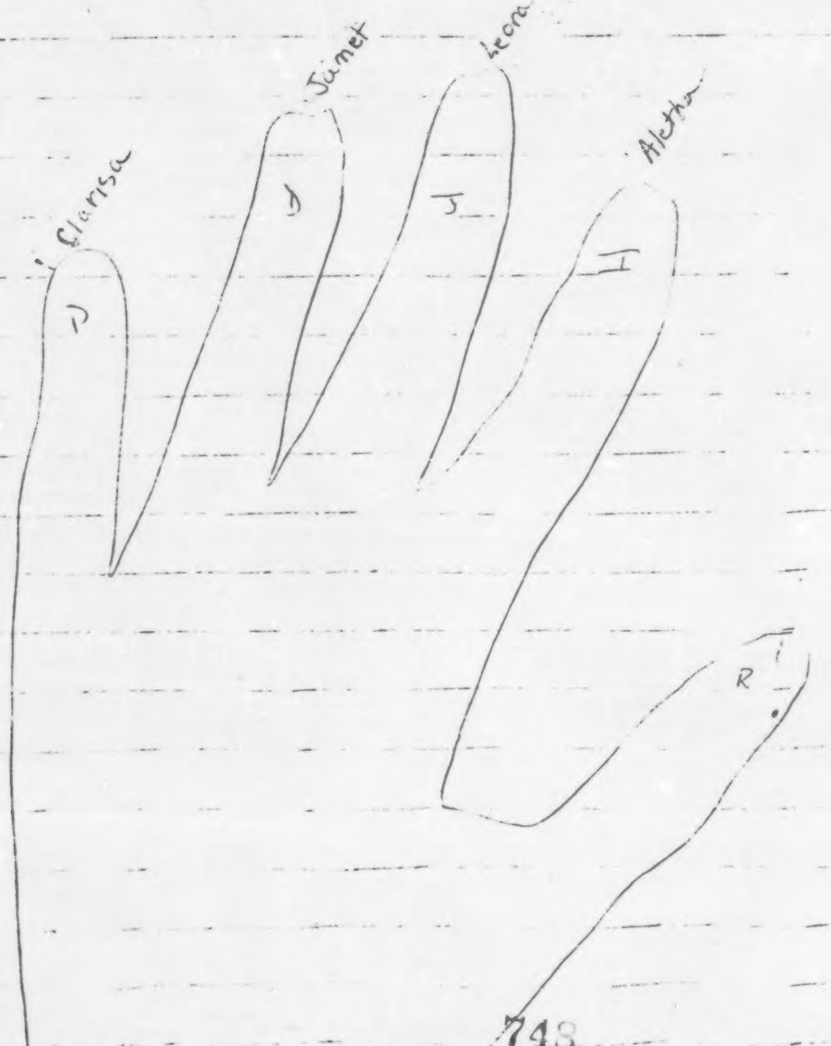
~~D.G.~~

~~M.B~~ 11 children

rich brown apartment

~~poor~~ ~~black~~ ~~house~~

~~welfare~~ ~~white~~ ~~motel~~


Clarisa
D
Janet
D
Leona
J
Aletha
I
R

Poems!

Roses are red violet are blue
and sugrar is sweet and so are you,
Miss Robinsion

Roses are red violet are blue I love
you thats true.

Roses are Red
Violets are blue
Sugar is sweet, & Love Always
so have a happy
Birthday from me
to you!

Theres no teachers I like the best
because you're more wonderful than
all the rest
I won't be in youre class
next year but I'll
remember you were always
dear.

(H) THE ETHNOGRAPHER AS A ROLE MODEL FOR WRITING

The influences on children of certain writing models has already been documented. Inadvertently the study provided a perfect opportunity to watch the introduction of a new role model for writing - the ethnographer - and the effect this had on writing in the classroom.

In two classrooms in particular (one high track and one low track observed during the first year), my presence provoked a pattern of interest and behavior. (That the same pattern was not created in the other two classes may have been due to time factors, differences in the personality of the children, and possibly even changes in my own note taking style.)

After an initial period of shyness, children began to approach me, asking questions that revealed some of their category slots for writers or note-takers. "Are you a reporter?" "a spy?" "a student teacher?" "a supervisor?" "the CIA?" "Are you writing things down on us?" (meaning would I report their misbehavior to the teacher). They wanted to know what I did with my notes and who I showed them to. "You mean like you write down things in the classroom, like the problems, so you can go back and tell people?"

The children grew bolder, looking over my shoulder as I took notes, gradually realizing that I wrote down the things they did and said. This provoked astonishment in some children. After Francie read my notes, she ran up to the teacher, tried three or four times to get her attention, and finally tugged on her dress in desperation, yelling, "Miss Martin, you just have to listen to me! Sue is out there taking notes and she's writing down everything you say!"

Some of the boys would grab my notebook and pass it around to read what

I'd written, commenting to me, "You cold-blooded" when they didn't find their name on the page. This behavior was fascinating, considering that even the very poor readers would struggle for longer periods of time to decipher my scrawled and abbreviated jottings.

The children gradually evolved their own explanations for my role and would tell them to new children in the classroom, "She just writes down everything on us. She don't write nothing simple either. She writes down everything. She wrote about how I was banging my head on the chalkboard and being simple. She just wrote that down anyway and I was really doing it."

Certain children began to try to exert some control on my writing, in a way diverting my task to their own needs. They would comment to me, "Debbie got up, did you get that down." "Write that down Miss Sue." "Danielle passing out papers, write that down."

In a few cases there seemed to be direct effects of my presence on the children's writing. One teacher claimed that having me in the class had provoked the children to write more and to take more interest in writing. She related an incident that occurred when she was scolding the class severely and angrily for some misbehavior. Francie suddenly pulled out a pencil and paper and began to write hurriedly. The teacher yelled at her, "Just what do you think you're doing?" Francie answered, "I'm getting this down for Sue."

The ethnographer as a role model for writing can be considered a small case study for the influence of other role models on the children, and suggests some questions. First, what type of model do teachers provide? Do they only keep records and grade papers and write out assignments, or are the classroom uses of writing more diverse. If teachers were to begin modeling the behaviors required from students, e.g., writing stories, letters, essays, would this provide added motivation?

(I) OTHER OFFICIAL LITERACY ENVIRONMENTS

Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops were a typical activity for some of the children. Classrooms varied from perhaps only one or two children (especially in the low track classes) up to about 10 or 12 involved in scouting. Many of the children, if not necessarily involved with scouting at the moment, had some contact with it through the years.

Both the Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops met in a large neighborhood Church on weekday evenings. In some respects scouting emphasized many of the same vaules stressed by the schools. One scout master told his boys sternly, "Listen! Are you going to listen to what I tell you? How can you expect to do it right if you aren't listening? How are you going to be able to learn anything if you don't listen?" The lecture could easily have come straight from the mouth of a teacher (which this scoutmaster was not). Scouting thus reinforced school type values, either directly (through lectures, discussions, scoldings, rules and regulations) or indirectly (through activities involving literacy and learning.)

Scout troops used reading and writing in a variety of ways. For example both the boys and girls in the troops were required to memorize their scout oath and often carried their scout manuals to school with them, reading over the oath in their free moments and memorizing it with the help of friends. The scout manual itself was a text book of sorts with sections that had to be read and learned to earn a badge. Girl Scouts were involved with cookie sales and kept records of their customers and the amount of each sale. During meetings both boy and girl scouts learned the words to songs from mimeographed sheets, practiced for plays, were quizzed on sections of the scout manual, etc.

Reading and writing were thus integrated very naturally into the context of other activities, always being done as a means to a very specific end. Since reading and writing were not ends in themselves, the child who had difficulty with literacy could find ways to cope, e.g. having a friend help with the cookie sale record keeping, learning the words to the song by listening to others, having someone go over the words to the scout oath with him, etc.

As with the church, the literacy environment created by scouting was neither recognized nor used in any fashion by the school.

Of all community literacy environments the public library was perhaps closest in form and spirit to the school. The library was specifically a place for reading and writing and for sustained silent reading and writing in particular. Libraries are places of quiet and of individual activity, and children are asked to leave if they become noisy and boisterous. But even here there are differences from the demands of the school. Children may sit and talk quietly, "socializing" as the librarian put it, and there is more freedom to walk about, look at books together with friends, etc. There is actually no insistence on reading in the library. To sit and thumb through a book of pictures is quite sufficient, as if interaction with a book in any manner is somehow beneficial. This concept of the benefit of just being around books was expressed by the librarian when she stated, "Sometimes I just let the children come in here and help me shelve books and things. That way they learn skills like alphabetizing and that way I can always slip something in about books."

The following example will illustrate something of the relaxed style of interaction with books characteristic of the library.

> Dino and another boy walked into the library. They wandered over to a table with a book on it. Dino began to read the title of the book aloud and leafed through the book. The two boys leaned over the book talking, pointing out things on different pages. They finished perusing the book. Dino walked to the back bookshelf and noticed a volume on display, "Ah! Louie Armstrong. This my boy!" He took the book down, looked at it for a moment and returned it to the shelf. The two boys sat back down at the table, talked for a few moments more, then got up and left.

A few observations about this interlude: First the boys were relatively free to choose their mode of interaction with the book, whether it be sustained silent reading or simply leafing through the pages. Second they were able to interact collaboratively and comment aloud as they read or perused the book. This type of collaborative interaction with reading was fairly common in the library, children often sharing books, and commenting on them to friends.

The library also provided an opportunity for children to observe people of all ages involved with books. (An opportunity not often available in school where adults do not generally "read" in the same sense that children are required to.) At times parents brought their children to the library and often brothers and sisters came together. High school age students could often be seen doing homework in the library and even toddlers were sometimes present.

Teachers did use the public library environment to some extent as an extension of the school and the school library. Children were walked over to the library several times during the school year and given opportunities to get a card (if they did not have one) and take out books. The librarian was in some sense an adjunct to the school system, often behaving much like a teacher, especially in her views about reading. "Reading is the most important skill people can have. Not just for jobs. Reading opens the door to the whole world; it teaches people about other cultures and opens up new horizons for them..."

Parents too seemed to view the library as a logical extension of the school and in all the homes visited, parents mentioned their children's use of the library. The library is a clearly recognized "literate" environment, called upon to symbolize perhaps that the child and the home is involved with books. It is a symbol shared by both school and community.

A final "official" literacy environment was the tutoring sessions run by volunteers at the local recreation center. Again, these were extensions of the school in many respects, taught by High School age girls as teachers. Children were scolded mildly for having failed to attend, were assigned work to do, were chastised for silly behavior, etc. During the time I observed, only 3 or 4 children were present with 3 or 4 tutors in the room. When one of the fifth grade girls asked if she could read (instead of doing spelling words) the tutor replied, "No, you don't come often enough and we'd never finish a story." When the child playfully promised "O.K. I'll come every day. Now can we read?" the tutor replied, "No, you have to prove yourself first. I'm not just gonna take your word for it." It was clear that school type values prevailed.

Across the room, a tutor worked with a single first grade girl. The child sat at a table with paper and pencil before her. The tutor stood at the board and explained a series of problems of the form 1 ☐ 2 = 3, 4 + 2 = 10 ☐ 4 in a precise and formal manner. "What sign goes in the box to complete the sentences? See these are sentences. What I mean is that 1 + 1 = 2 is a sentence just like, "I am happy", so if you have..." She continued in this manner, eliciting answers from the child. It was fascinating to observe how the tight constraints of formal style teaching were upheld even in a one to one tutoring session. The values, the regulations, the style of interaction of official literacy in the school have clearly permeated aspects of official literacy in the community. Learning (in a formal sense) is very much associated with certain behaviors on the part of child and teacher, whether the "teacher" be a Sunday School Leader, a Scoutmaster, a high school age tutor, etc.

(J) TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Contrast between Official and Unofficial Writing

Without exception, when asked about spontaneous writing, teachers either responded with examples of what I have termed "official" writing--letters, stories, poems, extra credit reports--or replied that no spontaneous writing occurred. (The latter response was especially prevalent in the case of low track classes.) However, once teachers were given specific examples of unofficial literacy that had been observed in the fifth grade classrooms, they expressed immediate recognition (often coupled with laughter) and supplied their own examples of unofficial literacy. Thus, it is not the case that teachers are unaware of unofficial writing in their classrooms, but rather that this type of writing is not "counted" for anything. There was only one very interesting exception to the above. In one of the primary classrooms, the teacher was initially oblivious to a certain type of writing that occurred. Once her curiousity was piqued by the interviewer's questions, the teacher began to examine coloring books in the children's desks. (She had initially stated, "Some children will take out coloring books when their work is done, but mostly they color in them.) The teacher then discovered that on the margins of the coloring book pages were bits of writing such as "Dear Darrin you is," "I hate you Daba," "Kelly is #1 in this book," etc.

Clearly, there is a contrast for teachers between "Writing" (in the great tradition, perhaps) and "writing" (in the little tradition). Teachers would respond with statements like, "The children are not really writing per se," or the low track children "do nothing that I would consider writing." One teacher made this contrast quite explicit. After we had discussed some of the examples of unofficial literacy (prompted by my naming of specific instances I had observed), and after the teacher had herself come up with a long list of observed instances of unofficial writing, she stated quite candidly, "I don't really consider it writing though." She then went on to define writing as "a high level process," "a statement that takes thought, experience and critical thinking skills and gives to its reader an experience." She further stated that many of the exercises she gave the children were just "a lot of fill-in." "In my heart they don't qualify as writing." Even when a child had written something that impressed her--she cited the example of a child writing, "His head is like a cantaloupe, all mushy and seedy"--she felt that this would qualify as writing only when "it's in a higher context like a novel." The same teacher also commented that while unofficial literacy might be important as a motivating force, not much could be done with it because of teachers' concern with the basic writing skills for the California Achievement Test.

Hesitancy to Write: The Correctness Dilemma

Beginning in the first grade, and continuing up through the sixth grade, teachers indicated that children were concerned about the correctness of their writing and hesitant to write independently for fear of errors. While on the one hand teachers praised the basal system's emphasis on proofreading as a way of teaching the importance of correct writing, on the other hand they stated that the children were sometimes paralyzed in their writing efforts by their fear of writing incorrectly. One first grade teacher said:

> Most of the children would love to say a story and could just go on and on telling about something. It's more difficult for them when they have to write it down. They have to worry about spelling and other things. We had read a story about an oak tree and they were to write their own story about what it would be like to be an acorn. One little boy just wrote over and over, "I'm an acorn. I'm an acorn. I'm an acorn."

A second teacher candidly blamed herself for this difficulty. "Perhaps it's my fault. I am always emphasizing good spelling and correctness.

Often this hesitancy to write was interpreted as lack of creativity. One teacher stated, "You'd think that all children at this age would be creative, but these children just can't write anything down.

The concern with correctness continued through the upper grades, especially in the low track classes. Teachers felt that low track children had such difficulties with the mechanics of writing that they no longer wanted to write. A number of the upper grade teachers echoed the first grade teacher's perception that the low track children's verbal abilities often far exceeded their written abilities, and that the low track classes often preferred to do verbal activities such as giving book reports in front of the class.

The Classroom Environment

A particularly important observation was made by the primary grade teachers. Concerning the classroom schedule and environment and the possibility of the children writing spontaneously, the first grade teacher stated:

> There really isn't too much time. We don't have much time in here. If the writing isn't part of an assignment, the children really don't have time to do any other kind of writing.

In pursuing this comment, I questioned a number of the lower grade teachers about the availability of notebooks and paper for free writing.

> They have notebooks that we call "Very Important Books." But I stress that these are for very important things we've learned in school and not be be scribbled in. They also have hardbound homework books, but again I stress that they shouldn't just draw or scribble in these.

Concerning the availability of blank writing paper this same teacher stated:

> They really don't have blank paper available . Once in a while I will give a child an extra sheet of paper to take home if he asks....Some of the children will draw on the back of their papers but I try to discourage this since it's usually just drawing.

That children circumvented these limitations in the lower grades is obvious. Margins of coloring books and backs of ditto papers served as writing areas (and of course in the upper grades, children frequently supplied themselves with writing paper and notebooks). However, the lack of easily accessible writing materials, coupled with the very full schedules and the teachers' (understandable) insistence on keeping of materials neat (i.e., not scribbling or drawing on papers) afforded little opportunity for younger children to simply write on their own. Thus it is very possible that theories and methods of teaching (emphasis on neatness and accuracy) may in some cases squelch behavior (scribbling, drawing) that is a necessary precursor to the free and uninhibited use of writing.

In contrast to an environment that discourages unofficial literacy, teachers also established environments that fostered this type of writing. A third grade teacher described such a classroom environment.

> We had a store in the corner of the room and the children made signs on their own. They were things like the store hours or something like, "Anybody that steals will be put in jail."

The teacher also related that she had placed a stack of old forms and sales slips in the store, and the children loved to fill these out. In this case, the environment created by the teacher fostered the occurrence of unofficial writing.

In the above example, writing occurred very naturally as part of a particular environment. It's especially interesting to note that this same teacher's efforts to set up a writing center were not nearly as successful. The teacher reported that despite the presence of pictures to write about, suggested topics such as "Happiness is" or "Love is" and things like a book of lists (blank pages with list headings: "My list of things that scare me," "My list of things I do well."), the children made little use of the writing center (except for certain word games). It can be surmised that in setting up the store, the teacher had created a very natural literacy environment, one which the children spontaneously proceeded to fill. The blank forms and sales slips were perceived as fitting into this literacy environment and were thus used eagerly. In contrast, many of the activities in the artificial setting--the writing center--were barely used at all. This suggests that perhaps, in order for writing to occur, the provision of a topic alone is insufficient. What is required is a context.

The Development of Unofficial Writing

It is apparent from discussions with teachers, that unofficial writing increases and changes with age and school experience. Certain types of writing appear as soon as the child perfects a few basic skills (e.g., writing his name); others do not occur until two or three years later.

The passing of notes begins as early as first grade and continues and increases through sixth grade. In the early grades, notes contain mainly names and phone numbers rather than sentences and messages. These soon develop into messages of affection, "hateful notes," (with threats), "pornographic" notes (containing taboo words), etc. It was the impression of several of the teachers that high track classes did more note passing than low tracks. Teachers surmised that children passed notes when they were not allowed to talk, wanted specific information like phone numbers, wanted "proof" of a response (as in the case of love notes) or, as one teacher said, wrote notes "just for the sake of passing notes. There's something special about passing notes." The sixth grade teacher commented that her better students wrote notes to get rid of anger. She described the special quality of notes. Putting something in writing "reinforces it more," makes it "personal, stronger, definite, lasting." She had observed that children always seemed to read the notes given to them, almost as if the child *had* to read a written message (whereas he was free to ignore a verbal message).

Closely related to notes were the "gifts" of writing given to the teacher. Again these began in first grade and continued up through sixth grade. They included drawings with messages like, "To Mrs. Kenny from Reola," "I love you"; poems given to the teacher; letters of apology for misbehavior; cards for the teacher if she was angry... Clearly the use of writing to express messages of affection and social relationships to both the teacher and other children was one of the earliest uses of writing.

Certain writing practices didn't seem to develop until about second grade or later. It was not until second grade that teachers began to notice the "circle yes or no" notes. ("Mrs. Norman Do you love me? Yes or no") While a few first graders would pretend to write in cursive, it was also not until towards the end of second and third grade that some children began to experiment with fancy letters--block letters, curliques, etc. (The second grade teacher indicated that mostly girls did this.) This interest increased with age. By third grade children were trying to imitate adult styles of writing (Scribbling very quickly was an approximation to an adult's handwriting) and were experimenting with different physical ways of writing (e.g., left handed). The imitation of peers and of adults is prevalent in this type of writing. Teachers stated:

> "We had one little girl this year who broke her arm and had to begin writing with her left hand. A lot of the kids then began to try to write with their left hands."
>
> "They write on the board when they have free time. Usually they copy the teacher's writing--put up homework, workbook activities, questions, pretend to be teachers. They just seem to like to imitate the teacher."

By fifth and sixth grades, fancy letter writing is full-blown. The sixth grade teacher mentioned that even her "nonwriters" would write their names over and over in geometric designs or graffitti styles.

The making of lists seemed to begin as early as first grade. The teacher was initially unaware of this use of writing, and only discovered it in the course of our interview when she opened a small notebook in one of the children's desks. On one page was written quite neatly and precisely:

Eggs
Bacon
Bread
Milk
Pamper

Again, by fifth and sixth grade, the use of lists is quite common.

Teachers did not begin to notice status writing ("I'm the best," "Room 100 is the greatest," until about the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. One sixth grade teacher referred to this type of writing as "ego reinforcement" and said that it occurred on papers, on book covers, and on the blackboard. The closest thing to status writing that occurred in the lower grades was the use of commercial stamps pasted to book covers. This was particularly characteristic of boys, who, by second grade, began to plaster their notebooks with stickers of the Hulk, Batman, etc.

The use of "official formats," e.g., Name__________ Grade___ ______, was not noticed until fourth grade or later. However, in second grade the children would sometimes use both the format and the filler simultaneously--"Name John Warren." Not until much later, however, did the format stand by itself.

Almost all teachers cited examples of copying done by their students. This was true of both high and low track classes. The children often presented what they had copied to the teacher, without necessarily trying to pass it off as their own work. In the upper grades, and especially with low track children, this tendency to copy was generally perceived as a problem. The fourth grade teacher related that the only type of writing her low track class would do spontaneously was to copy things from books, especially Black History, and then bring this copied work to show to the teacher. The teacher said that she had tried to explain to the children that "copying is not the same as expressing yourself on paper." She believed that the children copied because they were "fascinated with books. If they can't read they will turn to writing down the words."

The sixth grade teacher noted the tendency of her class to copy poetry in "different ways," "on a slant, with a picture, leaving spaces," and to copy posters, charts, and diagrams, an activity which they particularly enjoyed.

The types of writing noted by teachers at different grade levels are charted on a following page. As indicated before, lack of notice is not necessarily an indication that the writing did not occur. However, it can be taken as a reliable indication that the particular type of writing was at least not widespread. The chart, while only a rough approximation, indicates the increasing proficiency that children demonstrate with writing. (See next page for chart.)

Differences Between Boys and Girls

Teachers mentioned several small differences between the type of writing girls and boys used. For example, girls tended to pay more attention to penmanship, practicing handwriting and lettering over and over. Boys were especially attuned to the use of commercial stickers of favorite comic and T.V. characters. The boys also tended to write stories and make booklets about fantastical superheroes like Ultraman and Spiderman, while the girls wrote about events of their daily life. (This difference carried over into official writing as well. From my own observations and from teachers' reports, it appears that girls were quite adept at writing the standard

H-158

First   Second   Third   Fourth/Fifth/Sixth

Notes (names and phone #s) ____________________

Writing names over and over ____________________

Lists (only one ex.) ____________________

Phrases, wds, sent. on margins of paper ____________________

Attempts at cursive writing given to teacher ____________________

Notes, letters, messages ____________________

Circle yes or no notes ____________________

Exper. with block letters, etc. ____________________

Stickers on notebooks ____________________

Pictures with writing given to Teacher ____________________

Modified Official formats (Name John) ____________________

Copying from books, etc. ____________________

Signs ____________________

Apology notes to T ____________________

Fill out forms ____________________

Try new physical ways of writing ____________________

Cartoons ____________________

Stories on Blackboard ____________________

Fourth/Fifth/Sixth

Official Formats (Name________)

Roll Books

Comic Books

Graffitti Writing

Status Writing

Words to songs

Calendars, Schedules, etc.

Tickets, passes, etc.

compositions required by teachers, whereas boys tended to want to write only on favorite subjects that usually included sports and science fiction.) Girls were more likely to keep diaries than boys, and (according to one sixth grade teacher) boys were more willing to write if they expected the end result to be some type of verbal performance.

The Issue of Grouping

The problems of homogeneous grouping were mentioned spontaneously by several teachers. Teachers felt that the homogeneous grouping system afforded little opportunity for poor students to learn from and be influenced by more school-successful peers. Teachers stressed the importance of having children observe proper classroom behavior and good work and felt that with the homogeneous grouping system, the children were influenced only by their equally unsuccessful peers. The need for students to have role models was expressed in terms of enthusiasm by one teacher. "Slow classes are so dull. There's no spark of life in them, no one to start any activities. Everything has to come from my own enthusiasm." The teacher felt that the slower children needed to be with other children who were more enthusiastic.

The importance of peer role models can be extended to include writing: there was less spontaneous literacy in low track classes because there were fewer of the highly writing-oriented students to introduce new types of writing.

Summary

Several conclusions of the interviews should be reiterated and emphasized:

(1) Developmental and skill factors clearly influenced the use of writing in the classroom. Unofficial writing became more complex and sophisticated as children advanced in age and experience (or in technological skills and ideological conceptions of literacy).

(2) The classroom environment could either encourage or discourage the occurrence of unofficial writing. Lack of paper, emphasis on structure, and tight scheduling all contributed to the "suppression" of unofficial writing.

(3) The creation of a natural context for writing, e.g., a store, was a highly sucessful way to foster writing in the classroom. In contrast, attempts to interest children in writing without such a framing context proved markedly less successful.

(4) Children's efforts at copying when they were unable to read or write creatively, illustrated the "force" of literacy in the children's writing efforts. Many of the teachers were clearly sensitive to the children's "fascination" with books.

(5) Teachers perceived marked differences in the writing ability of high track and low track classes. While the types of unofficial writing produced seemed to be closely similar, teachers were much more aware of spontaneous literacy that was counted as official -- booklets, stories, etc. -- and used this as an index of the writing ability of the children.

(6) Teachers recognized that their own emphasis on correctness may have, to some extent, squelched the children's desire to write. Clearly, the goal of motivating children to write and the need to teach children to write properly often had contradictory outcomes.

(7) In their opposition to homogeneous grouping, teachers emphasized the importance of peer role models on children's performance. This emphasis may be extended to the need for writing models which would spur spontaneous literacy in the classroom.

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(V)

GENERAL FINDINGS

David M. Smith

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Introduction 1

Reflections on the Research Process 3

- (A) Working with Teachers 3
  - (1) Issues in starting with teacher-defined problems 3
  - (2) Issues of sustained relationship with teachers 7
  - (3) Issues in implementing findings 8
- (B) Doing Community Research 11
  - (1) Defining appropriate out-of-school settings 12
  - (2) Issues of race in community research 14
- (C) Team Collaboration 17
  - (1) The principles of collaboration 17
  - (2) The structure of collaboration 18
  - (3) The outcome 19

Understanding about Schooling 19

- (A) The Importance of Understanding Individual Schools as Unique Entities Existing Over Time 20
- (B) The Social Dimensions of Literacy 23

Conclusions 26

V. GENERAL FINDINGS

David M. Smith

INTRODUCTION

Part of the satisfaction in doing ethnographic research is to be found in the surprises that turn up. No matter how focussed the investigation, careful and conscientious observation will regularly result in new information and new leads that must either be consciously followed up, or recorded and, at least temporarily, set aside. Indeed, it can be argued that "being surprised" is an explicit goal of ethnography. It is an inevitable outcome of research that does not start a priori by formulating hypotheses.

While this openness to surprise may be one of the strengths of ethnography, it is not an unmixed blessing, either to the research process or to the organization and presentation of results. Unlike deductive approaches to research in which finite universes of issues can be identified, defined and then "exhaustively" investigated, ethnographers find themselves confronted with an ever expanding universe. Answers to each question inevitably lead to posing new questions, which like their predecessors, cannot be a priori ruled irrelevant to the quest at hand. Of course, not all nor even most of these new questions can be pursued by the researcher. Time and resource constraints dictate the necessity of making practical and sometimes arbitrary decisions as to research directions.

In the research effort reported here this decision-making process was facilitated by the regular seminar meetings and the circulation of papers among the research team. Through these exchanges each researcher had access to the collective wisdom and varied perspectives of the others in designing and pursuing his or her research. This continuous information sharing approach had the further advantage of permitting the research team, and especially myself and Hymes, who were less immediately involved in the field situations than the site researchers, to identify important themes obtaining across the various sites as they emerged. The results of reflecting upon these emergent patterns are presented here as general findings. While they relate in various ways to the findings of the individual research efforts reported in Section IV, they are not primarily summaries or even syntheses of them. To put it another way, throughout the project we have made discoveries that are more than simply the sum of individual parts. They emerged in our seminar discussions and as we informally worked through our material together. One goal of this paper is to capture these discoveries, which would otherwise risk falling through the net. If the report of extensive collaborative research is only a congeries of individual findings, a major advantage of this type of research will have been lost.

Another goal of this section is to meet our stated commitment to document the research process and to present candidly what we have learned about doing this type of research. The lessons are many. Some have been painful. We hope they will be instructive--both for us as we continue similar research within the relationships we have developed and to the audience of this report. In keeping with these two goals, the findings presented here fall into two categories: (1) Lessons to be learned in reflecting on the research process and, (2) Understandings we have gained about schooling.

In deciding what to include as findings, novelty was not a criteria. It may well be that experienced researchers familiar with schools will not find much new. My thinking was guided by two considerations. First, what did we experience or discover that would point up the strengths (or limitations) of ethnographic monitoring? Second, what can be learned through reflecting on the results of applying the research strategy outlined in the funded proposal? Specifically, this strategy called for the development of a team effort that would first establish relationships with teachers in school settings and then, after identifying teacher perceived problems move the research out of the classroom where the identified issues could be investigated in other settings. The results of this effort would be shared with teachers and their efforts at incorporating them into teaching practice documented.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

A. Working with Teachers

Our research plans called for the establishment of a close relationship between the teachers and the researchers throughout the project, one in which they worked as teams. At two points the teachers were expected to play a formal role in the process. These were in the beginning, when the research questions were to be formulated, and during the final phase when they were to be observed implementing the findings of the earlier research. Both the sustained relationship and the two types of special involvement raised issues that are worth commenting upon.

(1). Issues in starting with teacher-defined problems. Having teachers identify research problems in concert with a researcher proved to be a practical means for finding a focus but this approach has its limitations. Teacher-defined issues do not necessarily turn out to be the most important affecting student performances nor does asking teachers to define the focus insure that even the most pressing problems they are facing will be named. The greatest advantage to this approach may well not be in any increased relevancy of the research but in increasing the probability that teachers will make use of the research findings in practice.

As Gilmore points out explicitly (IV, D) and others, especially Fiering (IV, H), have tacitly recognized, the everyday life of classrooms is characterized by at least two spheres of activity. One is the official world of teachers, that which demands the bulk of their concern and activity. The other, largely the purview of children, is typically little understood, seldom taken seriously (sometimes as a deliberate tactic) or even attended to by anyone except children, unless it intrudes into the official world as distraction or disruption. In most cases this inattention to the sphere of peculiarly children's activities on the part of teachers is an inevitable result of the restrictions imposed by their roles. It is not the result of laziness or incompetence.

Research has been conducted on both of these spheres of activity. The alienation that results from the discontinuity between them, or the inappropriate interpretation of children's behavior on the part of teachers, has been stressed as the cause of a number of school problems. However, simply making this point has seldom proved to be a step toward any solution. To start with teacher perceptions and working with teachers in the research process adds a new dimension to the research. This approach recognizes that while the root of some school problems may be the discontinuity that exists between the classroom life of the kids and the expectations of the teachers, what is important is not simply the discontinuity per se but the way the former intrudes into the latter and is perceived by the teacher. Overcoming negative effects of discontinuity must start by teachers gaining a perception of the problem that includes both its meaning in her official world and in that of the children. One cannot be sacrificed to the other.

As our research has demonstrated, one way of going to the world of children is through the perceptions of teachers, in such a way that the teachers can be given room to incorporate (or reject) the insights as he or she wishes. Three of the researchers (Fiering, Gilmore and May) ultimately described aspects of children's behavior that were seen to have different meanings to the children from those they held in the official sphere where they intruded. By allowing the teacher to define issues as they appear to her or him, and then taking time to gain some understanding of the official world before moving to the children's world, we are able to account for a number of apparent misperceptions that turn out to be something quite different.

Some of the May material on attention can be used to illustrate this. A Typical incident described by her requires the researcher to account for the following "facts":

(1) A child disrupts the class by shouting at another child.

(2) The teacher tells the child to "pay attention."

(3) The child was found not to be deliberately inattentive but was engaging in a culturally appropriate mock adversary exchange.

(4) Later the teacher finds, judging by his work, that he had been paying attention to the lesson.

An approach to classroom research that focussed on the discontinuities between the culture of the child and the official culture of the school could well conclude that the teacher misperceived the meaning of the child's behavior and thus responded inappropriately. It seems more accurate to conclude that the teacher was right in her perceptions. The child was, after all, disruptive. Her response, "pay attention" was to the disruption and we have ample evidence that this is an appropriate response (as would be, "John, settle down!") to this and a variety of disruptive behaviors. The fact that the child was or was not "really paying attention" only became an issue on later reflection (sometimes at the instigation of the researcher).

Not having to posit teacher misperception as a cause of classroom conflict, of course, has the advantage of not forcing teachers into defensive positions with respect to accepting findings. The same sort of analysis could be made of teacher perceptions that "kids don't write" or "kids have bad attitudes." In all cases the teacher perceptions, given the world of school that concerns them, are accurate. Teachers are charged with the responsibility of making classrooms work, and maintaining order is almost universally seen as crucial to this goal. Any investigation of school problems must take teacher perceptions seriously if these investigations are in any way to foster solutions. As ethnographers, we recognize these are as much a part of the ethnographic reality as the discontinuities we observe.

Before turning to some observations on the issues encountered in maintaining sustained relationships with teachers,two apparent limitations encountered in having teachers define the research issue need to be mentioned. When we began our research we planned to research issues that hinder the acquisition of language arts skills by children. It was no accident that the teachers all came up with problems of classroom management. (One possible exception is the teachers (Fiering, IV. H) who identified "kids not writing." However, even this turned out, in many cases, to mean, "children don't do what they are supposed to be doing.) As indicated above, management is a major concern of most teachers and our experience suggests that they are in fact largely evaluated by their supervisors and by parents on their ability in this area.

Whether it follows or not that pursuing these teacher defined management problems will ultimately lead to the identification and investigation of the causes of poor student performance is not clear from our experience. It is, however, hard to imagine an alternative approach that would provide a surer guarantee.

A further interesting characteristic of this approach is illustrated by two incidents recorded during the research. A teacher in one of the West Philadelphia Schools, Mrs. Immani Brown, was asked to participate on a panel at the University of Pennsylvania Ethnography in Education Research Forum last March. She eloquently iterated a number of major problems facing urban teachers today. She mentioned none that we were researching. (See Section III for a transcript of Mrs. Brown's remarks.)

Thus, even though teachers themselves identified the problems we were researching, they did not name those that were necessarily the most important to their professional lives. There are several possible reasons for this--prior notions by teachers as to what would be interesting questions to "university researchers," the way the research was presented to them, a reluctance to have researchers study some issues. (No doubt the initiation of the proposal in response to language-related issues, and the development of our relation with the schools in the context of concern with reading, led to focus on language, literacy, and classroom-managed issues, rather than, say, drugs.)

The second incident involved the researchers. In the Spring of 1980, after several months of field work, while the whole school system seemed to be in turmoil--strikes being planned, teachers being transferred about for integration purposes, schools being closed for economy, assault and vandalism getting newspaper headlines--the researchers in one of the seminars, spontaneously began to ask, "are we wasting our time on trivia?"

One of the researchers, perhaps giving vent to some understandable cynicism, expressed the feeling that what was really at issue in schools was the lack of money and that ethnographic findings were the last thing the schools wanted or needed. Another appeared frustrated that the particular issue she had chosen to research didn't, at that point, appear to give promise of yielding insights that would be useful to teachers or to students. It became apparent to all of us in the ensuing discussion that one of the major strengths of ethnographic research can be a source of great frustration to researchers who inevitably get caught up in the immediacy, if not the urgency, of the situation they have become participants in. Its strength lies not in directly addressing issues that appear pressing, but in patiently ferreting out underlying, and frequently unsuspected, cultural explanations. In the long run these explanations could prove helpful not only in addressing the immediate foci of the research but the more important issues facing teachers as well.

We experienced one interesting surprise in our approach of starting with teacher-defined issues. We expected that one useful outcome of the research would be a great deal of information reflecting the perspective of children. Indeed we assumed that a way to accomplishing all that was intended would be to be able to identify and understand representative individuals. Of course the prerequisite is to identify and understand what is characteristic and common. The first task proved to be very substantial in its own right. (Especially taking into account the part-time basis of the research). Those researchers who began with teacher-defined problems and classroom situations found themselves in this situation--they mostly had enough to do to make sense out of the general character of the phenomenon on which they focussed. The two cases in which individual children come sharply into focus are cases in which the researchers started outside the classroom--Lussier as an adjunct to the teacher-initiated observation at Shortridge, Davis as a complement to the classroom-focussed study at Harriet Tubman.

(2). Issues of sustained relationship with teachers. In our initial entry into the schools we relied upon the principals to help choose teachers to work with. Their criteria were primarily proper grade level and probable personal compatibility. While these were important criteria, maximum success for this kind of research requires much of the teacher-researcher relationship.

The teachers had to see her/himself as, and be seen as, an equal partner with the researcher. The researcher had to be seen as a learner, another interested and ultimately supportive adult in the classroom, not as either an expert or an evaluator. The teacher would be expected not only to take an active part during the classroom day but to put in extra time reacting to field notes and consulting with the researchers.

A major problem in establishing this type of relationship is finding time, and associated with time, how to reward appropriately teachers for their effort. With several exceptions (Woods-Elliot and Gilmore spent great amounts of time with teachers in the evenings and weekends) most of the researcher interactions took place during the day. The reasons were obvious. For the most part teachers did not live in the school communities and, of course, union regulations would not permit us to require teachers to put in extra time.

The matter of compensating teachers for their involvement is discussed in some detail in the Smith paper appended to the report. (Ethnographic Monitoring: A Way to Understanding by Those Who Make Schools Work.) In a word, it is crucial, if teachers are to be truly collaborators and not simply informants or subjects, that they share some of the rewards of research traditionally reserved for researchers. This will include professional recognition as well as financial compensation.

We offered tuition scholarships for courses taken at the Graduate School of Education. We invited participation in the University of Pennsylvania Ethnography in Education Research forum (One teacher and two principals participated in 1980 and two teachers and the three principals will probably participate in the 1981 forum.), organized workshops and urged them generally to be involved in university activities.

(3). Issues in Implementing (and Documenting the Implementation) of Findings. The area of documenting the implementation of research findings is one in which we did not meet our original expectations. This was not so much a failure of the research as it was a problem with our expectations.

In the first place, despite the relationships that already existed between the University and the schools at the beginning of the research, we discovered that getting to know schools and communities well takes a lot of time. Our original plan was to spend a few weeks in the classroom, then go into the community, while maintaining our classroom ties, and then to work with teachers to make changes in their teaching based on what we found. It is impossible to understand a classroom in a few weeks--unless of course one brings a set of assumptions about the similarity of classrooms. (Even though our approach insists on openness to the uniqueness of each situation, perhaps we ourselves took too much for granted that the several settings would be reasonably familiar and similar.)

Another problem we failed to anticipate that affected the pace of the research was related to the dependence upon part-time student researchers and some inherent limitations in researching schools, where, unlike traditional anthropological research sites, one cannot "live in". Starting, as we were in the context of relations with these schools, it was natural to involve several researchers, to work with all of them and to try to get breadth of coverage. The people available, however, to do the work could work only part-time--unlike anthropologist thrown into the field, who may be able to work only part-time as well, but perhaps gains understanding from all the other things time is spent on in the place itself.

Planning a third phase of implementation and documentation proved unrealistic for reasons more important than constraints of time. Clearly, a linear, research-to-practice sequence, is incompatible with the research model we were developing. If teachers and researchers are working as collaborators, sharing insights and observations from the very beginning, teachers will, probably unconsciously for the most part, be incorporating changes into their practice from the beginning. Indeed, this is one of the major potential strengths of an ethnographic monitoring approach. Innovation does not depend on the application of research findings. It becomes an integral part of the teaching process as the teacher and the researcher reflect together on this process and its outcomes.

Our experience offers several insights as to how this can work. First, the one researcher who attempted the most traditional method of applying her research to practice, Fiering, does not report very striking results. (It may be no accident that Fiering also had the most experience as a public school teacher of all the researchers.) She, after spending a good bit of time in the classroom and some in the community, made a number of suggestions to the teacher in a "what if?" format. Most of her suggestions were of a kind that are reported in professional teacher journals.

Two of the other researchers, Gilmore and Woods-Elliott, took very different approaches. The teacher Woods-Elliott worked with took pains to incorporate her into the teaching process from the very beginning. As a result the researcher did not have to depend upon suggestion to the teacher able to provide demonstration under the critical eye of the teacher. The significance of this is clear. The researcher was really doing research. She was observing without the restrictions imposed by teaching, most of the time. Evenings she typed up and reviewed her notes of the day. Then on regular occasions the teacher would ask her to take over all or part of the class. During these times she was able to test her conclusions and further revise them. Through all of this the researcher and the teacher worked closely together. At least one striking result is reported in the Woods-Elliott paper when, after a two-day writing workshop conducted by herself, the teacher and the teacher's aide, reflection indicated that they (Woods-Elliott and the teacher) had gone about the tasks very differently. The teacher then planned a later workshop so she could attempt the Woods-Elliott approach.

Gilmore reports another experience. One of the teachers she worked with was a reading specialist in the school. She established a close relationship with her that included visits to each other's homes and participation on a professional paper. As part of her research, Gilmore investigated the practice of "stepping" a children's genre of activity that was receiving a great deal of attention in the school and which was generally frowned upon. At the same time the teacher had already been experimenting with finding ways to incorporate similar activities with their obvious appeal to students, into the reading-language arts curriculum. Her attempts seemed to be receiving good reviews by the children.

While the researcher cannot take credit for this innovation or its success, it is clear that both her close relationship with the teacher, which included sharing details of her findings, and the fact that she made children's activity genres explicit (and thus legitimate and countable phenomena) objects of her attention, had an important effect on the teacher--an effect infrequently recognized as a contribution of research. Both this teacher and the one Woods-Elliott worked with were known as "innovative" before their association with researchers. The researcher was able to provide a stamp of legitimacy which is seldom available for teachers from either peers (who are professionally isolated in their work) or administrators (who's major concerns often are management or evaluation).

In summary, while our original plans for fostering and documenting change in teacher practice as a formal part of our research proved flawed, our experience does suggest a number of ways in which ethnographic monitoring can have impact on teaching. Probably the most significant, and one having great interest to proponents of the effective schools approach, is that illustrated by the experiences of Gilmore and Woods-Elliott. Rather than simply focussing upon problems and then making suggestions as how they can be addressed, ethnographers find themselves strategically situated to discover what is working already, and then to provide support, explanation and legitimacy for these practices.

B. Doing Community Research

Working in the school communities was a crucial part of this research. As ethnographers, we assumed that finding solutions to (or even gaining understanding of) school problems would require observing children as they interact in a variety of settings. At least some problems in school result from conflicts between behavior patterns they bring in and school expectations. Information that can be gleaned on the meaning of behaviors in out of school contexts can be of help to teachers confronted with behavior or attitudinal problems in the classroom.

As it turned out, our community, or more properly, out-of-classroom study developed along a number of unexpected directions. We found, as indicated earlier, that the whole process took a great deal of time and none of the researchers were working more than half time. A major problem was the uncertainty those of the researchers who were white, middle-class, university students inevitably feel in entering the private lives of Black children. (This point will be elaborated later.)

These were the more obvious problems we encountered. Upon reflection it seems apparent that part of our frustration and need to change direction stemed from some fundamental requirements of the type of research we were attempting (e.g., the requirement that the problem under investigation dictate the kinds of settings to be observed) and the nature of schools and their relationship to urban residential communities and to their clientele.

(1). Defining appropriate out-of-school settings. Several issues of definition, that were not apparent at the outset emerged during the research. At the one extreme, simply identifying the effective school community can be a problem. Given the development of magnet schools, the professionalization and the unionization of staff, the control exercised by the central administration (who assign teachers and administrators), to say nothing of the development of a dual school system whereby minority children make up the bulk of the public school clientele while white children attend non-public schools, the public schools are increasingly becoming alien fixtures in parts of the inner city. Contacts between the school and residents of the area where it is located must almost always come from the community to the school. Teachers, typically, only pass through the community on the way to and from school. Parents are inevitably required to deal with school staff on the latter's turf. Understandings about home and street life frequently are only those conveyed by the children themselves.

There are, of course notable, exceptions to this picture. A teacher in Harriet Tubman works closely with the volunteer director of a community pre-school in an effort to provide continuity in the experiences of the children who attend the pre-school and will later enroll in the public school. The principal of Shortridge is proud of his contacts with the businesses near the school and he does spend a good deal of time in the school although he lives in a northern suburb. The teacher Woods-Elliott worked with, as was the case with the reading teacher colleague of Gilmore's, kept in constant personal touch with the students, exchanging phone numbers and encouraging calls, taking boys on bike outings, girls for pajama parties, etc. One of the teachers Watkins observed lived in the immediate vicinity of the school.

By and large, however, despite these exceptions, the schools' contacts with the communities tend to be official and limited. This poses a dilemma for researchers attempting the kind of study we were doing. It can be difficult, if not downright unsafe, for researchers to simply "hang around" with the children outside of school. It is also difficult to simply drop into homes. An alternative would be to use the school contacts--letter from the principal, invitation by one of the paraprofessional staff or one of the volunteers working in the school. Given the situation sketched above, this approach risks limiting the contacts, either by perceived association with the school or simply because the school's official contacts do not reach the settings important in understanding children's out-of-school lives.

Alternative approaches include observing children in public or semi-public settings such as churches or scouts: taking them out of the classroom and working to create informal settings with them; taking them on organized events (visits to the zoo, to basketball games, etc.); accompanying them on school sponsered field trips and observing them during school "down time"--recesses, before and after school. Each of these approaches to observing children in out-of-school contexts was tried. Each yielded important data and each had its limitations.

For example, while Lussier was able to elicit a great deal of information from a group of boys by carefully establishing a close relationship with them, taking them out of class on occasion and organizing several outings with them, the teacher in the class found herself confronted by a group of jealous girls who wanted her to do the same for them. Both Fiering and May accompanied some of their children to church but found that they were limited in the kinds of analyses they could do and the children they could observe.

In some cases it was possible to get important out-of-class data without leaving the school. For some issues the important question is not, "what do children do in their homes and the community" but "what do they do when they are with their peers?" The most common peer rendezvous is the school building or the playground before and after school. (Children spend very little time with their peers at home.) Gilmore's study of stepping could not have been done at home, at church or at scouts. This does not mean that she will never want to get into homes (indeed, she has received a number of invitations and plans to continue the research for another year, following leads into the homes and elsewhere). What her experience does point up is the importance of letting the issue under investigation determine the kind of setting to be looked at. The goal of ethnographic research is to discover the meaning of behaviors to participants across setting, but not to engage in exhaustive surveys of settings for their own sake.

(2). Issues of Race in Community Research. Just as Gilmore's research focus dictated that she should spend time with peer groups before entering homes, Watkins' problem (parents frequently don't seem to care) required him to get quickly into the homes. The fact that he was Black without a doubt facilitated his entry. His approach was through the official channel of the principal who helped him identify families, sent a letter to them and then called a meeting at the school. Upon contacting the parents he soon discovered that he knew several of their families either in the south where they had originated or through contacts in the city.

The experience of Davis is in some ways parallel. She was asked to join the team precisely because she had established contacts in the area and it was increasingly apparent that we were probably not going to be able to do the community part of the study as we had originally planned. Being Black and having access to the Black network characteristic of the city, she had no trouble getting into and being accepted in the homes.

On talking with both Watkins and Davis, however, it became apparent that they, as Black researchers, were being faced with some problems the others had not reported. This experience called for a reevaluation of the community research up to that time. The problems were partly those of reconciling the demands of the two hats the researchers were wearing. On the one hand, they were in the employ of an Ivy League university, were supported by a federally funded research grant and, in the case of Watkins, came with apparent official sanction of the school. They had a clear obligation, and a desire, to do a credible piece of research. On the other hand, they were being accepted and treated as friends, even trusted family. Increasingly, the information they were getting was the kind that would be shared among friends. The dilemma they faced was classic: How to avoid betraying friendships and at the same time meet the obligations of their employment?

This was not the issue that suggested a reevaluation of our past community experience. There were two other developments. First, both of the Black researchers--even they were not entirely aware of this--evidenced real hesitation about precipitously entering the homes in the communities, despite the fact that they had been "officially" invited. It was as though they suspected that the "official" invitations were possibly mainly gestures of politeness offered because of who they represented, a phenomenon we have all experienced.

I was surprised at this hesitation (and a little impatient) because the year before each of the researchers had been invited and had visited some homes. On reflection, however, it is not at all clear to what extent they were really allowed into the families. The Black researchers had to deal with the risks of possibly getting close. One risk was that they would become privy to information as friends they would find difficult to include in a research report.

The second event that was surprising was the altered picture of community-school relationships that was emerging. In the case of Shortridge, particularly, the researcher uncovered evidence of some potentially serious conflict between some of the parents and the school, resentment that the school demands much of parents but gives little in return, concern that one of the teachers was "racist" and a lack of understanding of school expectations of parents. While these findings did not necessarily portend serious problems, the picture they gave was certainly at odds with the one gained by the researchers up to then.

This discussion is not to overstate the importance of a researcher's race. Our experience suggests that neither Blackness nor whiteness, per se, pose serious hinderences to doing good research. Our experience does suggest the importance of being sensitive to the possible problems one may have to resolve as a consequence of his or her race.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCHER CHARACTERISTICS AND APPROACHES

	Race and Sex	Teaching Experience	Acad. Major	Project Tchrs/ Grade Level	Extent/Nature Comm. Contact	Research Focus
Davis	Black Female	Community College, College	English/ Ed. Cult & Society		Extensive. Homes and Community	The Community. What schooling means to the community
Fiering	White Female	Elementary	Ed. Linguistics	WF- BF-	Cursory. Mostly public institutions	Spontaneous Writing.
Gilmore	White Female	Elementary. Curriculum Develop.	Language and Ed.	BF-Reading Sp WF-Fourth BF-Fourth	Moderate with Children. (Girls)	Attitude, communicative behavior and demeanor.
Lussier	White Male	none	Business/ Sociology	BF-Fifth WM-Fifth	Extensive with Children (Boys)	Boys peer interactions.
May	White Female	none	Anthropology	WF- BF-	Cursory. Mostly public, some girls activities	Attention
Watkins	Black Male	Elementary. Reading Sp.	Ed. Reading	BF-Fifth WM-Fifth BF-Sixth WF-Sixth	Extensive. Homes community	Parent Perceptions of School Expectations.
Woods-Elliott	White Female	High School Teacher Col. Curric. Dev. (Australia)	Language and Ed.	WF-Sixth	Almost none.*	Teacher conceptions of the teaching of writing process.

*This was a result of the ad hoc nature of her involvement. She was not hired as one of the original researchers.

(C) Team Collaboration

As can be seen from the preceding chart, the researchers were a diverse group. One additional interesting characteristic is not shown, their experience or training in linguistics or ethnography. Only three of the seven researchers listed came to the project with much training and experience--Fiering, Gilmore and May. Lussier was enrolled in a field methods course and Woods-Elliott was discovering and informing herself about ethnography on her own. To Davis and Watkins, doing ethnographic research was a totally novel idea.

The faculty team, on the other hand consisted of Hymes and Smith, both anthropologists and linguists, Anderson, a qualitative sociologist, published in the field of Urban/Black social issues, and Larkin, experienced in teacher education with a strong interest in anthropology. From our experience, it would appear that formal training does not, per se, convey any great advantage in doing the kind of research reported here. Given the composition of the research team and the nature of our interaction, other factors outweighed training as criteria for effectiveness. Tracing the principles we established in our collaboration and then sketching the actual structures that developed, reveal the factors that seem to affect team collaboration.

(1). The principles of collaboration. Some of us on the faculty team had been involved in collaborative research in the past and were aware that it can be delicate and fraught with possible pitfalls. (I had done an analysis of a very large collaborative field research effort funded by NIE in 1978. See, Smith, David and Lynn Gregory, Issues in Field Research, NIE, 1978.) All of us were experienced in graduate level teaching at the University. In the initial planning and proposal writing (which did not include students) this background led to the tacit emergance of a set of principles which would be followed. Three are significant here.

(1) The research roles would be apportioned so that graduate students worked in the schools and communities and the faculty would meet regularly with them to react to their experiences. The researchers would, in effect,develop an inside perspective and collect the data. The faculty would provide an outside perspective and work to help the researchers understand what the data meant.

(2) There would be a free sharing of findings and problems among the research team. We would work together to understand what we were seeing and discovering.

(3) The researchers would be given their heads. We recognized that the styles of ethnographic research must be highly personal. Too much direction would risk leaving no room for important discoveries. Any particular problems or weaknesses would be recognized and could be addressed through the sharing.

After the fact reflection suggests that for the most part these principles are sound. They follow from the requirements of ethnography, particularly the dictum that the researcher is the primary research instrument and to be effective must be free to make use of all of his or her attributes. Problems, when they arose, can be traced to the actual structure of interaction we developed, which did not permit the full application of these principles.

(2). The structure of collaboration. The actual structuring of our interactions was constrained by the dual roles each of us played--professor or graduate student, on the one hand, and researcher on the other. The constraints were not so much of time (although it did prove difficult to keep on top of the accumulating data) as they were relational. Both the researchers and the faculty tended to conduct the research on a Graduate Seminar Model. There were two problems with this.

First, as graduate students, seminar participants are not used to sharing preliminary, raw, data or problems they are encountering with their professors so that they can reflect on them together. They expect to be evaluated. They don't expect to turn in papers that are far from being finished and in messy draft form This problem was further exacerbated by the fact that Hymes, Principal Investigator, was both dean and a recognized name in the field of ethnographic research. Some graduate students found it difficult to treat him as a collaborator, and in effect, a peer. The issue was exacerbated further for those researchers who had already experienced careers as respected professional educators. They found it doubly difficult to submit unfinished products for review, comment and criticism by faculty who would ultimately be their thesis advisors and, who at the same time, probably knew less about the realities of schooling than they did.

The second problem was more of substance than of status relationship. As faculty members of the team, we had a tendency to react to aspects of the researcher findings that struck responsive chords, given our past and current research interests. The sharing seminars frequently became exciting intellectually but failed to deal with some of the more pressing research issues the site investigators were facing. We frequently assumed that the researchers were collecting careful ethnographic accounts and that the interesting data they were sharing came from this process. It became apparent fairly late that some of the data collection had been quite flawed. What was needed was not so much the encouragement of a stimulating seminar as some careful elbow to elbow work.

(3). The outcome. Two comments on the above discussion are in order. First, we found it striking that the researchers who had the least formal training in ethnography or in linguistic methods seemed to find it the easiest to share with us both emerging findings and problems of doing research. This is not a paean to ignorance. Their academic careers were such that the status differences conveyed by the graduate seminar model did not affect them. Second, encountering these problems does not imply that the outcome of the research is seriously flawed. The problem was more one of tension than of bad research. It did mean that more emphasis was placed on individual reports and analysis than we had originally anticipated.

UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT SCHOOLING

Seperating reflections on process form substantive understandings about schooling is impossible, as the above section demonstrates. Many of the more important substantive findings have been introduced and discussed already. This section will present broad findings not adequately developed earlier. As is inevitably the case with research such as ours, these findings are as suggestive for further investigation as they are conclusive.

(A) The importance of understanding individual schools as unique entities existing over time.

Neither traditional educational research, with its emphasis on making generalizable conclusions, nor the spate of recent naturalistic studies (including ethnographies), which are mostly topic focussed, are addressing what our experience suggests may be a significant oversight in our understanding of schools. Each school is a unique entity with its own particular history. To really understand, and ultimately address, any problem a school faces this must be taken into account along with more general knowledge about how schools work. Yet one looks almost in vain for any examples of any school where researchers have worked systematically to accumulate information over time that would yield a comprehensive picture of the school. This is particularly disturbing, given the current vogue in educational research to document examples of effective schooling as a tactic in gathering data that can be used to improve schools in general. Without careful attention to a comprehensive understanding, the documentation efforts are probably doomed from the start.

In the following brief discussion several findings from our research are presented that support the notion that cummulative understandings of individual schools is of critical importance. (No attempts will be made to carefully develop the arguments supporting this position. That has been done by Hymes in his presidential address to the Council for Anthropology and Education entitled "Educational Ethnography", 1980.)

There is a popular notion, almost axiomatic among thoughtful critics of schooling today, that inner city schools, despite the best intentions of teachers, administrators, are, in Rist's terms, little more than "factories for failure." Several studies, such as those by McDermott (1974) and Mehan (1979) have succeeded in documenting the processes by which children "learn to fail." All of the schools in our sample are inner city schools serving almost exclusively poor Black families. None of them, however, really deserves the epithet, "factory for failure" despite the fact that a researcher duplicating the studies alluded to above in isolation would probably come up with similar results.

More importantly, our research has indicated that there are fundamental differences between the schools that only emerge after intensive investigation. Indeed our own systematic research in the schools, albeit fairly comprehensive in scope and in place for two years, is only now beginning to reveal some of these differences. A review of the cases of Shortridge (particularly the research presented by Anderson) and Harriet Tubman (based on personal observation and personal correspondence with Davis and others doing research there) is illustrative.

It is readily apparent, even to the casual observer, that the two schools differ, as expected, with respect to matters like style of administration, general ambience, professional longevity and retention rates for faculty and curriculum. What is not so immediately clear are the reasons behind these differences. Some of those are not even hard to come by when one looks at the histories of the two schools and the community contexts.

Shortridge is in an area that has just undergone a major transition to becoming almost entirely Black. The present residents do not have long roots in the community. The school staff is also fairly new and has few significant ties with the neighborhood. Harriet Tubman, on the other hand, has been a Black school for many years. Many of the students have parents or grandparents who attended when they were youngsters. The principal is Black, as were his immediate predecessors, and like some others on his staff he attended the school and started his teaching career there. Obviously he, and others on his staff, have very important ties to the community.

These differences themselves are interesting and, of course, potentially important for understanding the two shcools. However, the story does not stop here. These discoveries in themselves raise a number of further questions. How, for example, is it possible for a school to maintain the kind of continuity and stability observed in Harriet Tubman, given the forces of change that are perceived to victimize inner city poor neighborhoods? Is it possible that schools are themselves not simply passive victims of the forces affecting our cities? (I.e., urban decay, gentrification, white flight, etc.) Can they, in fact play an active role in shaping the destinies of the communities?

Both Harriet Tubman and Shortridge would seem to argue for a yes answer to the last question, but for different reasons. There seems little doubt that Harriet Tubman is not simply what it is because of the nature of the community but the community is affected by what the school is. As one example, the city some years past built a housing project right next to the school. Instead of simply contributing to the decay of the community, as many such efforts did, this rather gave a number of long time residents who had been displaced an opportunity to move back so they could send their kids to Harriet Tubman. The influence Shortridge exerts upon the community is of quite a different nature. Many saw it as providing a stabilizing element in the changed community. It too looms large, not because it is a venerable old institution, but because the leadership is determined to be strong in a new situation.

We can go even further in our analysis. One characteristic that seems to distinguish one school from another is the way teachers, administrators, parents and students perceive themselves. How do they conceptualize their mission?

Anderson has pointed out that the Shortridge principal sees his school as a kind of "outpost of the Great tradition." He feels that he has a mission to bring the advantages of this tradition to the children and their families in the school community. Our experience with teachers and parents does nothing to seriously contradict this conclusion. They tend to either actively share in this vision or to passively accept it as necessary and good.

The situation in Harriet Tubman, surprisingly, is not as different as one would expect. Both school people and parents seem to feel that the mission of the school is to "evangelize" in the name of the same "great tradition." However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Black version of this tradition is different from that being promulgated at Shortridge. At the very least, different aspects of it are stressed. While at Shortridge, for example, "correct attitude" is stressed, it functions as a means for sorting out and tracking students. In Harriet Tubman, discipline is the watchword. It even has equal billing with basic skills. However, it is not presented as a mechanism for tracking individual stuents so much as it is a concern that no student embarass his or her school or race as a whole.

(B) The Social Dimensions of Literacy.

A number of different lines of investigation are suggesting that in order to understand the processess of literacy skill development, particularly writing, one must attend to the social context. For example, Emig has recently declared that we need to abandon a number of myths educators hold about the process of learning to write. One of these is the notion that it is essentially a solitary activity. (Emig, 1980) Staton is working on an NIE funded project to see how children's writing changes when they are given the kind of systematic feedback that has been shown to be important to language acquisition. In a similar vein a recent study by Birnbaum, following Britton et al 1975, has indicated that one of the two essential conditions for the development of writing skills in children was the availability of audiences, who evidenced interest and responded to the child's productions (Birnbaum, p. 204, 1980).

Another line of research, following the lead of Mehan et al., is making it increasingly clear that the traditional conceptual distinction between academic and social skill acquisition so pervasively taught in schools, has no empirical basis. This, of course comes as no real surprise to social scientists or to teachers. However, it is falling to the lot of ethnographers to begin specifying some unexpected social dimensions of literacy acquisition (or admission in Gilmore's terms) and the uses of literacy skills.

Our research, particularly that of Fiering and Gilmore, provide a beginning to this direction. Both studies confirm what is becoming increasingly apparent to research, namely that the acquisition of literacy skills, both reading and writing, is, in a literate society such as ours, a "natural" phenomenon. (Heath, 1980, Goodman, Yetta 1980, personal communication). The studies go beyond this, however.

Fiering has provided a picture of the classroom as a setting where writing is not only encouraged but flourishes even when it is not encouraged.

Her description stands as a vivid demonstration of the adaptive capacity of children. These are children who we now know have developed extensive skills of oral communication, skills which (with others) have well served both their personal and social needs outside of the classroom. Finding themselves in classroom contexts where talking is almost universally discouraged, but where the paraehernalia of writing are readily available. they spontaneously make rich and varied use of writing as an adaptive resource.

In these settings writing can be observed serving a variety of expressive and social functions. Defining peer group membership, articulation of social status and aesthetic expression, are three among the adaptive needs we see writing used to meet. While Fiering's work has laid a useful foundation, one suspects that further investigation--tracing individual children's spontaneous writing across a number of settings and looking at how different kids spontaneously write (or don't) in similar settings, for example--would add greatly to our understanding of writing as a means for social adaptation.

Gilmore's paper has touched on the way children make use of another set of literacy skills, skills that have traditionally been considered difficult to teach. Not only do they use these word attack skills to do very sophisticated analyses of words, without always being aware that they have any relationship to literacy, but they are used to effect very complicated social arrangements. Furthermore, the entire activity of stepping, making use of the most traditional of school taught literacy-related skills, is seen as antithetical to what the school is teaching. In so far as these activities reflected school phenomena, it was the instructional tactic--the social aspect--they borrowed and caricatured.

It is tempting to suggest from these findings, as well as the other insights that are emerging from research on literacy that it is a serious understatement to say that there are social dimensions to literacy. In the lives of the children in our study, and perhaps to an extent we have not imagined in the lives of others, it appears that the reverse is the case. It is the literacy functions that are incidental to social functions. Children have needs. These will be met. If among the available resources are literacy skills or literacy paraphernalia, they will be used.

Insofar as this is true, it holds important implications for teachers. For one thing it would suggest that taking things from the children's culture and inserting them into teaching practice can only be done with a profound understanding of the social funtions the phenomenon performs for the children. Fiering, for example, reported an attempt by one teacher to use captioning as a teaching tactic after having observed the children doing it on there own. The students failed to respond to this attempt. We have no information on the social meaning captioning had for the children. However, it is safe to assume that captioning when introduced by the teacher as "official" school activity performed a drastically different set of functions.

Gilmore's reading teacher, on the other hand, has been able to skillfully adapt street rhymes to a classroom activity that children enjoy. It is no coincidence that she has a reputation in the school as one of the teachers who really listens to children, not only in her classroom but, through efforts she initiates, out of school as well.

CONCLUSIONS

As promised in the introduction, this paper has not attempted to recap the many findings embedded in the individual research reports, not does it contain a systematic rationale for ethnographic monitoring. This latter point, as well as a discussion of some other general findings (E.g., the advantages of involving school personnel in the research, the important role researchers can play as aids-to-reflection in the classroom) are treated in the paper appended (Smith 1980). It has presented a number of findings which have implications not only for understanding how schools work but for defining future research thrusts.

The reflection this paper has occasioned has in general revealed a greater richness of data and insight than expected (a credit to the researchers who not only worked part-time while pursuing graduate student careers, but almost to a person suffered some unexpected life crisis during the course of the study). However, I have tried to be candid about the ways in which we did not meet our original expectations, presenting these shortcomings not as failures but as opportunities to learn.

Two areas in particular come to mind where our conclusions would be strengthened if we had more data. (Both of these, incidently, will be addressed in an already funded new research project to start immediately. (Using Literacy Skills Outside of School: An Ethnographic Study of Lower and Middle Age Children and Their Families. David M. Smith, Principal Investigator, NIE.)) We don't have the comprehensive analysis of community norms of verbal interaction of the type Philips brought to bear on the classrooms in her study of participant structures in Warm Springs (Philips 1972).

The second piece that is largely, although not entirely missing, is the view from the children. We have only a very sketchy picture of the meaning of writing and literacy in their lives, the picture generally of what verbal competence is for them, as living lives in which school is a salient part, but only a part. Again, it should be stressed that these are "weaknesses" only in the sense that having done the research we now see them as important pieces to be added. Had we framed our approach in some way so as to get this information, it is certain that a number of the data we did collect would be missing.

Both the findings presented throughout these reports, and more importantly, the kind of continuing relationship that has been established with the schools witness to the soundness of the original premise of the research. Ethnographers working with school practitioners find themselves in positions not only to gain important understandings of schooling, but to make these understandings accessible to those who are charged to make the schools work, the practitioners themselves.

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(VI)

ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING: A WAY TO UNDERSTANDING BY THOSE WHO ARE MAKINGS SCHOOLING WORK

David M. Smith

Paper prepared for the University of Delaware Conference: Ethnographic Research in the Schools: What's it all About?" May 1981.

VI. ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING: A WAY TO UNDERSTANDING BY THOSE WHO ARE MAKING SCHOOLING WORK

David M. Smith

THE ISSUES 1

- The Traditional (Production) Paradigm of Educational Research. 3
- The Ethnographic Perspective. 4

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING PROJECT 7

- Underlying Assumptions 7
- Description of the Project: 8
  - (1) The Wider Context 8
  - (2) The Year One Research 9
  - (3) The Year Two Research 12
  - (4) Expected Outcomes 13

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING 13

- Summary 13
- Application--Two Stories 14
  - (1) A Teacher's Story 14
    - (a) The Story
    - (b) Analysis
  - (2) The Principals' Story 17
    - (a) Description
    - (b) Analysis

CONCLUSIONS 19

REFERENCES 21

This paper was prepared for the University of Delaware Conference, Ethnographic Research in the Schools: What's It All About? May, 1980.

ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING: A WAY TO UNDERSTANDING BY THOSE WHO ARE MAKING SCHOOLING HAPPEN

ABSTRACT

A major set of issues of concern in education today have to do with the relationship between research and practice. Despite decades of effort and the expenditure of billions, there is scant evidence that our accumulated understanding of education is making much of an impact in improving American education. Blame has been variously leveled at the nature of our understanding and the absence of an effective system for delivering these findings to practitioners in consumable form. Ethnographic monitoring promises a model for profoundly increasing our understanding of schooling and at the same time, for insuring that the ownership of this understanding is not the exclusive purview of a group of expert-elites. In this paper, two of the major research-practice issues are described and a West Philadelphia based research effort is shown to address them.

I. THE ISSUES

I was recently contracted to document the implementation of a new language arts curriculum in the suburban/country school system. The new curriculum purportedly made use of recent research on language arts instruction and the implementation design was based on up-to-date thinking about program implementation. A key feature of the project was the constitution of (building level) teams who were charged with the bulk of implementation decisions and activities. Funding for the project came through the Intermediate Service Agency in the county which hired a project staff consisting of four people who were either reading specialists or who otherwise boasted expertise in language arts instruction. The role of this staff was to offer support, resource networking services and advice, when requested, to the building level teams.

The building level teams consisted of the principal, several active classroom teachers and, whenever possible, reading specialists and/or librarians. The teams were supplied with materials, were extensively inserviced, and met once a week with one of the project staff to plan and review activities. The project staff was generally non-directive, letting the building level teams take the lead in developing and implementing program plans in each school. This approach was taken deliberately to underscore the belief that the building level teams knew the schools and were closer to the rest of the school staff, students, and the community. The project direction expected that, relying in this manner upon a well-supported and informed building level team, would obliviate the gulf between school practitioners and the outside experts. The teams would provide a natural vehicle for the application of research findings.

An important and unexpected side effect resulted from this experiment. It turned out that the constitution of the building level teams created a process of self-selection, so that the members were not always "typical" school staff. They volunteered, or were volunteered by their principal, precisely because they had demonstrated an above-average willingness to experiment and innovate (or in rare cases, because they seemed to be less inclined to innovate than other teachers and were seen as in need of a challenge). Furthermore, the act of being singled out and given the perquisites of a building level team member, as meager as these were, had the effect of constituting a group of "elites"[1] within the school. Sometimes derisively labeled JAS (junior administrators) they faced the same problems in reaching their erstwhile colleagues that outsiders would have. Not only had the relationship with the other teachers been changed, but they found that the new knowledge they had become privy to, and in some cases had integrated into their thinking, was not easily understood or adopted by the others.

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[1] The problem appears to be that the nature of school leadership is such that attempts to use peers as mediators between research and practice, or as in the case being described, between practitioners and externally based innovation, frequently are seen as isolating and separating the involved school personnel from their colleagues. These peer leaders possess none of the leadership criteria recognized by the school culture--they are not certificated nor do they occupy a recognized legitimate place in the school's leadership hierarchy. As a result their ability to lead is sharply curtailed. Virtually every principal in the schools participating in the aboved described project found themselves having to deal with this problem.

This experience goes to the heart of the problematic relationship between educational research and practice and points to the two central issues which will be addressed in this paper. They can be thought of as; 1. The relational problem--What must be considered in establishing the most fruitful kind of relationship between researchers and practitioners? and 2. The communication problem--What must be considered in creating a vehicle that facilitates the use of research in the improvement of educational practice?

A. THE TRADITIONAL (PRODUCTION) PARADIGM OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Many approaches have been devised to shorten the gap between research and practice. Most, initiated by researchers, are based on some permutation of the model illustrated above. That is, practitioners, who exhibit certain characteristics that make them compatible with the goals of the research, are selected and trained, or otherwise singled out, as collaborators.

It is not unusual to bring teachers or administrators to educational conferences so that the audience can hear directly the researcher and practitioner discuss the process they have evolved for working together and explain the advantages or problems for the practitioner engaged in the project. In a typical presentation I recently witnessed, the researcher started out by explaining how he set out to "find a teacher who could and would collaborate with him". He then went on to say, "I was fortunate to find Ruth. Many teachers would not have been receptive to working with me".

I do not mean to criticize research simply because it starts with the researcher or depends on collaboration with atypical practitioners. Such endeavors frequently yield valuable insights on a variety of issues and may prove to be very rewarding for the teacher involved. However, they, like the project alluded to earlier, do little to address the problem of the gap between research and practice. At best, they relocate the gulf to a point within the school. At worst, they risk creating a new elite where none existed before.

Insofar as these new models proceed from an ethnographic perspective (and many do), they properly perceive the relationship between ethnographic researcher and informant as one of colleague. They fail, however, to make full use of this intrinsically fruitful role relationship. The role becomes adapted to and redefined by a research-practice paradigm long established in education.

This traditional approach to research is essentially based on a production paradigm with research viewed as an enterprise with findings seen as products to be packaged and delivered to consumers. Researchers are expected to gain understanding by examining school phenomena (with varying attention to context) and to generalize these understandings so that they can be made available as findings or products to practitioners through a variety of delivery mechanisms. The practitioners then are charged with applying these generalized findings in the diverse settings they represent. Following from this approach to research, failure of research to improve practice is generally attributed either to invalidity of findings or a breakdown in the delivery of findings to practice.

B. THE ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

Ethnography evolved as a means for understanding human social life. Its usefulness to educational research can be fully exploited only as this enterprise is conceptualized as essentially one of human interaction. Ethnographers cannot view the primary goal of research as the production and delivery of goods but rather as the facilitation of productive interactions between various kinds of persons comprising the educational establishment that will result in increased mutual understandings. Productive interactions are those that permit one party to make use of the other as a resource in satisfying his or her reasons for entering the relationship. A student, for example, presumably attends school to learn the skills necessary for productive living. A school of education's responsibility to a school may include training teachers as well as providing support of various kinds for developing responsive instructional policies. Whether the relationship is individual or institutional, the sine qua non for productive interaction, is a sensitivity to the needs of the other proceeding from a particular history and life context along with a respect for the other's capacity to learn and adapt. It is not the ability to deliver a body of expertise.

Coming back to the issues at hand, any model applying ethnographic approaches to educational research falls short if it merely succeeds in increasing the understanding of schooling for researchers, funding agencies or professors and graduate students in schools of education. It is particularly disturbing if in accomplishing this limited goal it succeeds in improving the skills of some practitioners at the expense of their relationship with others. It is equally disturbing if ethnographers have to "look for" practitioners who display attitudes and behaviors that are compatible with their own, by implication suggesting that others are less capable of understanding or less able to profit from the contributions of research.

Ethnography need fall into neither the trap of informing only an elite nor of making researchers of practitioners. As Hymes has observed, in the article that served as stimulus for the project to be described presently,

> ...of all forms of scientific knowledge, ethnography is the most open, the most compatible with a democratic way of life, the least likely to produce a world in which experts control knowledge at the expense of those who are studied. The skills of ethnography consist of the enhancement of skills all normal persons employ in everyday life.... (1979, p. 74)

This being the case, ethnography, properly understood, as an approach to educational research, promises both to yield a corpus of knowledge that is useful to practice in its immanence and to provide practitioners with a way of understanding, compatible with the place they have already established in the educative process. This promise is based on the premises 1) that patterns of behavior (e.g., student performances, teaching styles, administrative practices) result from cultural processes that are themselves dependent on individual histories and contexts and 2) that *a priori* decisions as to "what counts as significant" cannot be made.

In practical terms, the first premise means that any understanding of school phenomena must take into account the culture of the school, of the community and of the particular school practice (e.g., of the latter, the culture of comprehension characteristic of a particular classroom that will affect the teaching of comprehension as a reading skill). Our knowledge of schooling is particularly lacking of such holistic understandings. Heretofore, research has largely concerned itself with identifying variables (often mostly devoid of meaning) that obtain across settings.

The second premise suggests the need, not only for appreciating the perspective of practitioners (understanding their emic view) but for a willingness to take seriously, and to count as meaningful, practitioner knowledge and skills. This last point requires elaboration since it is particularly important to understanding the evolution of the project described in this paper.

Children do not come to the classroom as blank slates. They come, not only with an innate imperative to learn, but with a great deal of knowledge and an intricate set of interactional skills developed in their pre-school lives. The same respect has not typically been shown for the knowledge and skills that teachers and administrators have acquired in their professional lives. When, for example, a school principal decides in mid-career to enroll in a graduate program and earn an advanced degree, the skills and professional expertise he brings with him are largely ignored. He is required to design and carry out an "academically respected" research project which must pass committee muster before he is admitted to the degree. The situation is parallel with respect to classroom teachers.

As a result, the academic community denies itself access to a wealth of knowledge about the realities of schooling. By the same process, the principal, in his existence qua graduate student, must at best, hold in abeyance the reality he has experienced as a professional educator while he views the world through the lens of the academic. At worst, he too comes to believe that his naturally acquired skills and knowledge do not count for much in the economy of education.

Researchers typically assume the academic stance. Their goal is not the understanding of the realities of schooling, as practitioners understand it, but the extrapolation from it of those pieces that count as important from their perspective. In short, little counts as legitimate research discovery that has not been uncovered through carefully controlled experimental designs and which stands the test of statistical significance as determined by the researcher and the design.

Quantitative research does not have a corner on this failure to understand what really counts from the practitioner perspective. Naturalistic and other qualitative approaches are equally guilty when they carefully choose informants withwhom they are compatible, when they choose to describe processes they see as important and fail to check their perceptions with participants, when they choose schools to describe that conform to preconceived cannons of "interestingness", when they fail to wrestle with the thorny question of equally compensating practitioner-collaborators for their efforts (financial renumeration can rarely replace the professional growth, personal satisfaction, academic respectability and wider exposure researchers claim as their right) and above all, when they treat their practitioner-colleagues as merely informants with an annoymous credit in the final report while making no attempt to see that the report is available to and understandable to them. Ethnography, in the truest sense, lets "what counts" be determined by the total context. This applies equally to types of schools (there is no such thing as a "typical" inner city school), specific teaching or administrative practices or tokens of school behavior.

II. THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MONITORING PROJECT

A. UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

A model for applying ethnography to educational research while at the same time, remaining faithful to these underlying premises, has been termed by Hymes as "ethnographic monitoring". Ethnographic monitoring is predicated upon a view of ethnography as "...a disciplined way of looking, asking, recording, reflecting, comparing and reporting. It mediates between an understanding of what members of a given community know and do, and an accumulated comparative understanding of what members of communities generally have known and done". (Ibid, p. 75)

The monitoring process is carried out by participants, with their knowledge of the particular setting, working cooperatively with ethnographers who bring the comparative understandings. This cooperation is a key feature of the process. It serves to enhance the validity of any analysis, through a process not unlike the kind of triangulation suggested by Elliott (Elliott, 1976, p.22) and,

> since the purpose of ethnography is to aid the program, its result must be communicated to the participants in the program

> in any case. It is far better to have the communication as an ongoing process throughout the program. An additional benefit may be to share ethnographic skills that participants in the program will be able to use in other circumstances. (Hymes, Op. Cit., p. 85)

The greatest value of cooperative ethnographic monitoring, however, again quoting from Hymes,

> ...is that the participants in the program will have the firmest grasp possible of the working of the program, its successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses, in relation to their hopes for it. They will not be in the position of being confronted by an outside evaluator's charts and tables, and told a rating for their program, with nothing to say, or nothing, at least, that such an evaluator feels required to heed. The participants will not have been bystanders. They will have concrete knowledge of the process of the program, and be able to address the processes that have produced whatever statistics and graphs a formal evaluation process may yield....The participatns in cooperative ethnography may benefit from having their cumulative observations and interpretations compared with independently obtained measures. Both kinds of information could be combined to provide a deeper understanding. But if measures are to mean anything, especially in relation to...education as a process of social change, the ethnography is essential. (Ibid, p. 85)

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

1. The Wider Context

In the summer of 1978, the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania was funded by NIE to implement a project of ethnographic monitoring of language arts instruction in three elementary schools located in Philadelphia School District #1, the district adjacent to the University. Each of these schools was in the process of implementing the state approved, Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading/Language Arts Plan (PCRP), a program of major curriculum reform authored by Morton Botel, a professor in the School of Education. This program, based on a holistic, rather than a sub-skills, approach to reading is designed to lead students through four critical language arts experiences and requires the active support and leadership of the principal for success.

Not only had each of the principals in the project schools agreed to take the leadership in implementing the PCRP, but each was enrolled in an

Ed.D. program at the University and was planning to make an analysis to some aspect of the implementation project a topic of their dissertation. These principals were three of some twenty District #1 administrators enrolled in the program and committed to do similar research. The Ed.D. program, although predating the Ethnographic Monitoring Project, incorporated features of the latter.

Serious effort had been made, for example, to establish a spirit of, and venicles assuring the reality of collegilaity between the administrators and their professors in the School of Education. The school committed itself to find ways, without sacrifice to quality, to count as academically legitimate the perspective, the skills and the expertise the administrators brought as experienced professionals. They would not, that is, be required to design, implement and defend experimental research as part of their degree requirements.

As partial compensation for their participation in the ethnographic monitoring activities the principals and teachers were offered tuition credits for courses taken in the Graduate School of Education and were assured that they would be invited to participate at professional meetings where the research has been presented to other audiences. Furthermore, they were promised a role in all major project decisions and it was agreed that project reports would be shared with them and their comments solicited. It was with these understandings, and in the context of these previously negotiated relationships, that the project formally got underway in the fall of 1978.

2. The Year One Research

A first step was the composition of a research team. This consisted of four University of Pennsylvania faculty--Dell Hymes, Dean of the Graduate School of Education; Eli Anderson, a qualitative sociologist with extensive research experience in urban Black communities; James Larkin, Director of Teacher Education Program and David Smith, Assistant Director of the Center for Urban Ethnography, a linguist and anthropologist with experience in educational ethnography; and four graduate student researchers, two of whom had been public school teachers.

While only one of the researchers had had significant training in ethnographic research, each enrolled in a graduate field methods course taught by Professor Anderson during the first semester of the project. In addition, the researchers' field training was enhanced by a weekly seminar held throughout the entire project period, attended by all eight members of the research team. At these seminars, researchers were given an opportunity to bring up for discussion both procedural issues being encountered or substantive findings.

For the most part, the researchers were given their own heads in deciding the issues they would investigate and the procedures they would adopt in the investigation. The field methods course and the weekly research seminars were designed to provide support and guidance as needed. Before the researchers entered the schools, Professor Larkin, in consultation with the respective principals, identified two classrooms in each school as beginning research sites and secured the assurance of cooperation with the classroom teachers.

The research plan called for three of the researchers to each attach themselves to a single school and work with the two teachers in that school to identify teacher-perceived issues in language arts instruction. The researcher would then investigate the issue, as participant observer, from the teacher's perspective, student perspectives and his/her own perspective. One researcher, for example, looked at the issue of "paying attention" which the teachers indicated was a problem. She started by cataloging the kinds of behaviors the teachers evaluated as either "paying attention"or as "not paying attention". She then carefully observed children in a variety of settings to see what these behaviors meant to the children themselves. When were they attending? When not? What did it mean to pay attention or to not pay attention?

This observation of children in various settings eventually took the researcher out of the classroom and into the community and homes of the children. Her goal in these settings was to uncover patterns of interaction, as well as community values and norms that would serve to explain the behaviors at issue in the classroom. Were there, for example, community approved styles of responding to questions that would create interference with teacher expectations if carried into the classroom?

The other researchers followed much the same pattern. They worked with teachers to identify issues, then investigated these both in the classroom and in a variety of out-of-class settings. The fourth researcher was something of an exception. He started as a floater, gathering background information and answering questions for the other researchers in the three school communities. By the end of the year, he had attached himself to a group of children from one of the classes, working with them in a variety of settings, including their classroom. Whereas three worked from the classroom out, focusing upon teacher-identified issues, he worked from the outside in, focusing on the children's interactions.

Each of the researchers conferred informally with the teachers throughout the year and at the end of the second semester, prepared reports of their findings which were shared with the teachers who then had the option of distributing them to their colleagues. While most of the project interaction with the teachers was mediated through the researchers, the faculty members of the team all spent some time in the school and had numerous occasions to confer with at least some of the teachers. In addition, three plenary meetings were held during the year. The first, at the University, before the project got underway, was an occasion to explain the project and the teacher participation. The second, midway in the year, was held at one of the schools and consisted of informal sharing between the project staff, principals, teachers invovled in the research, and some of their colleagues. At the end of the year, the project staff hosted a dinner for all of the participants at the University faculty club.

The principals' involvement took a rather different route. They were concerned with their own research on implementing the PRCP and with the implementation itself. These activities were, however, related to the goals of the ethnographic monitoring project. In addition, during the course of the year they took a graduate course in Ethnographic Methodologies from Professor Smith, which had as a major component discussion of the project. They had also taken a course with Professor Larkin previously and Professors Hymes, Larkin and Smith were all actively involved as program advisors to them.

3. The Year Two Research

In order to continue the project for a second year, it was necessary to secure another grant from NIE. This funding came late, November 1979, and when the second year got underway, several major changes were made in the project. Two of the original four researchers had left the project, both from the same school. We were fortunate to find replacements who not only had had extensive experience in public schools but who already had established contact with the project school. They were able to begin without apparent disruption to the working relationship that had evolved during year one and, following the precedent established in year one, began by working with teachers to identify issues in language arts instruction encountered in the classroom.

A fifth field researcher was added to the team who was able to bring a new dimension to the project and to add a fifth school. This researcher had been working on a sister project, a project with the same NIE monitor, designed to describe a school with a successful reading program. The researcher had been working in the school community for a year. She not only was able to build on the relationships she had developed and to bring a wealth of insights to the project from this past effort, but the school itself, especially its relationship to the neighborhood, is proving to be an interesting counter-example of the general view of Black inner city schools as factories for failure. While upon cursory examination, it might look like most inner city schools--an old physical plant with modern annex, located in an area of urban blight, bordering a low-income housing development, with an apparent hodge-podge language arts curriculum--when the surface is penetrated we find a school that parents are proud to send their children to, one that teachers seldom leave for better settings, and one in which children are imbued with a genuine desire to excell.

Another significant change in the second year project was the role assumed by Professor Anderson. He decided to spend the year focusing upon the role of the principal in one of the schools. Through interviews and participant observation over the year, he is collecting information that will be used to produce a case study detailing the life history of the principal and his role in the community and the school, as instructional leader and agent of change in the language arts efforts of the school.

During this second year, less emphasis was placed on weekly seminars, they were held on a need-to-meet basis, and more on providing individual support for the field researchers. They have been meeting regularly, one at a time, with Professors Hymes and Smith, and occasionally, as deemed helpful, with Professor Larkin. During both year one and two, office space was provided for the project and the field researchers were encouraged to meet frequently among themselves to share insights and to discuss problems they encountered.

4. Expected Outcomes

Several products are expected from the effort. Each of the researchers is expected to submit a report presenting, in narrative form, his or her findings. (In addition, several of them might well be able to submit dissertation proposals based on their work.) Hymes, Smith, and Larkin will prepare a report synthesizing the results of the individual researchers' efforts and Professor Anderson will produce a case study of the principal's involvement in one school.

The field researchers are investigating the following issues: 1. The teaching/learning of comprehension, with emphasis on comprehension as a social fact. 2. The presence, form and functions of unofficial writing in the classroom and its roots in out-of-school life. 3. The uses of silence and sulking in the classroom as exhibited and evaluated by both teachers and students. 4. The uses and functions of literacy in the school community. 5. Parent involvement in the instruction of language arts, with particular consideration given to what counts or doesn't count as evidence of caring about children's school experiences.

III. WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

A. SUMMARY

The data contained in these various reports, as rich as they promise to be, may well turn out to be only one of the significant results of the effort. What we are learning about schools and processes of schooling as integrated entitites which must be understood in their own particular contexts, could well prove of great value in informing our future teacher education programs and the shape of additional research. The relationship established between the Graduate School of Education and the school district promises not only to continue yielding its mutual benefits, but could well serve as a model for expanded relationships with the Philadelphia system or other school districts. Finally, the research procedures themselves have provided a model of researcher-practitioner cooperation, along the lines envisioned by Hymes, that confronts directly the relational and communication issues sketched earlier.

While not all of the problems encountered in the project have been satisfactorily resolved, and while the final verdict on the project's ultimate usefulness will have to wait until its completion, our experience does strongly suggest that researchers and practitioners can work together without one having to dominate or adopt the viewpoints of the other, with relatively equally recompense for time and effort expended and without the knowledge gleaned becoming almost exclusively the property of the researcher.

B. ILLUSTRATIVE APPLICATION: TWO STORIES

1. A Teacher's Story

a. The Story

One of the teachers in a project school called and asked if she could come to the University and talk with me. She is a teacher who has been working with two of the field researchers and who also works very closely with the principal of her school. She had read a manual I had prepared to help teachers make use of the ethnographic perspective in understanding their schools. The manual had been distributed to all of the teachers in the project at a workshop.

This particular teacher, Maria, had to write a masters' paper for a program in which she was enrolled at a local college. As her paper topic, she had decided to look at the uses of obscenity in the classroom. This was a particularly pressing problem for Maria because of her background, training, and experience. She had been raised in a very traditional Italian-American Catholic home. She had attended parochial schools throughout her elementary and secondary school career and had been graduated from a Catholic college. For several years subsequent to graduation, she had taught in parochial schools.

Maria's first two days in the public school system, in the project school where she is still employed, were so shocking that she decided to resign. Her father and the school principal talked her into sticking it out. She has now been in the school for years and is considered by the principal to be one of his prize teachers.

Among the things she first found shocking about the school was the blatant use of, what she considered, obscene language by the students. She not only overheard this language in their informal, out of class talk, but in the classroom itself and, occasionally, found it used in their written work.

Being faced with this issue brought her to a classic dilemma confronting many teachers today--how to discharge her perceived professional responsibilities while at the same time not alienating the children, not allowing her personal feelings to color her evaluation of them and not unwittingly violate important norms and expectations held by the children. She could choose to ignore, forbid or "correct" these students' behaviors. Yet, she was adult, teacher and White. The children were students and Black. How would her choices or options affect her relationship to them and their learning?

For several reasons she had come to the conclusion that if she really wanted to deal effectively with the issues--to turn the behavior into a resource rather than a barrier to learning--she would have to gain some understanding of its meaning from the perspective of the children. She came to me looking for a way to think about and analyze the issue.

On Maria's first visit to my office we started talking about 3:30 in the afternoon. We planned to spend an hour or so outlining her paper. Before we were finished that evening, a little after 11:00, I had taken her to two libraries, where I checked out several books for her and we had worked through the specific issues to be addressed in her paper. At the present time, Maria is working through the literature and is regularly conferring with me and the other researchers as she gets her paper together.

b. Analysis

This incident illustrates a number of the fruits of the kind of relationship we have been developing between the Graduate School of Education and District 1 schools. I want to highlight just two of these:

i. Researcher as aid to reflection. First, Maria didn't come to the conclusion that she needed to understand what obscenity meant to her students, that these meanings might be quite different from her own, or that ethnography might provide a way to reach this understanding because we tried to convince her. We didn't go into the school and conduct inservice programs or workshops in the hopes of convincing teachers that ethnography was important or that we could show them how to do it. Maria came to this conclusion herself, abetted by her involvement with us and informed by readings we had suggested.

Following from this, her coming to me was not the result of an invitation but an act that proceeded naturally from the set of relationships that had been developed between us and the school. From Maria's perspective, we are not simply researchers there to study her and her colleagues, nor are we university professors with expertise to sell. We are colleagues with whom she can spend time reflecting on what's happening in her classroom (and outside), her feelings about it and her experiencing of the world of teaching without fear of censure or humiliation.

The aspect of the relationship that is important here is not the trust that has been established--it is relatively easy to develop trust between researchers and practitioners. It is the aid-to-constructive-reflection that is significant. This is a facet of researcher-practitioner relationships that is typically not nurtured, the emphasis rather being upon the richness of data accruing to the researcher.

ii. Rewarding collaborators. The second important point to this story has to do with the reward structure that appeals to teachers. I didn't spend those hours with Maria because I am a nice person or feel good about sacrificing my time. I am being paid to devote time to this project. Working with teachers is an integral part of my job. Whatever good Maria gets from working with us will be shared by me (witness my using incident in this paper). This points up a serious problem that has been little addressed in traditional research models.

Too often, practitioners who "participate" in research projects with research oriented universities end up with minimal rewards for their involvement. At worst, they may receive an anonymous citation as a footnote or in the preface to the final report. This reference has to be anonymous because, implicitly at least, whatever the researcher has to say may well reflect negatively upon the practitioner. At best, they receive some financial compensation for their time based on the established union scale.

Maria's experience suggests that practitioner rewards not only can be substantial, but they do not have to be different from those sought by researchers. These include academic credit, professional growth, recognition among peers and enhancement of personal worth. Each of these has traditionally been seen as the right of the researcher but seldom of concern to practitioners.

2. The Principals' Story

a. Description

The participation of each of the three principals in this project constitutes a story of its own--a story rich in detail and as varied as their own personalities and administrative styles. None was chosen to participate in the project because they exhibited special characteristics except that they were already involved with the school in other capacities. Each has had to concern him or herself with the "problem image" associated with schools whose students regularly score below the average of the California Achievement Tests administered yearly in city schools.

One is a highly visible, recognized leader among the principals of the city who sees himself not only as a strong leader in his school but in the community at large. One is almost a polar opposite, self-effacing, low-key, known for quietly reconciling strong vocal factions in a school community with a history of stormy relations between the school and community leaders. The third, less flamboyant and visible than the first, prides himself on the support he affords his staff both by giving them the "space" they need to develop their craft and in his own role as instructional leader.

Of course, each of these characterizations fails to capture the complex set of features that define these principals as administrators and leaders. They do point up the variety of styles and personalities they represent. For each participation in the research project has meant something different.

On several occasions, informally, for example, as they discuss their own research efforts, and more formally, such as when they have been called upon to make presentations at conferences, they have alluded to this participation. While they all have expressed the sense that their perspective on schooling, understanding of their schools and of their roles in them has been changed, these changes all reflect/are adapted to their own basic concerns, while each, for example, is still searching for ways to use his new insights to raise student achievement scores--an issue never of direct concern to the research stall--they see the immediate applicability differently.

One explains how he is better able to see the issues impinging on his desire to maintain a position of leadership in the school and community and to consolidate his control. the second stresses the improved relationship with teachers and the breaching of instructional-administrative barriers in the school. The third emphasizes the usefulness of his newly gained insights on improved staff development and hence the upgrading of instruction.

b. Analysis: Keeping Ownership in the School.

The point of this is that while all of the principals report positive gains from their participation, they remain essentially the kinds of principals they were at the start. None appears to feel constrained to posture as scholarly or "academic". None comes off as apologetic for their staff or their roles as administrators. (I have never heard, "we understand that this isn't the ideal thing to do, but you have to understand the kind of teachers and students I am dealing with.") In talking with the research staff about their schools, there is little sense of attempts to create a "we" versus "them" dichotomy.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

I framed these stories by suggesting that the Ethnographic Monitoring Project addressed two issues important in the relationship between research and practice. I referred to these as the relational problem, "What must be considered in establishing the most fruitful kind of relationship between researchers and practitioners" and the communication problem, "What must be considered in creating a vehicle that facilitates the use of research in the improvement of educational practice."

By way of sustaining this claim I have sketched several of the main features of the project and its setting and have presented two illustrative "stories". Two potentially important sets of findings emerge.

First, while the literature suggests a great deal of concern to establish a trustful relationship between researchers and educational practitioners that will yield rich data to the researcher, little thought appears to be given to establishing relationships that provide aid-to-reflection for the practitioner. By neglecting this, researchers are not only failing to make use of a potentially fruitful data source--the teacher's own thinking about her perceptions and understanding of school processes--but fail to seize an occasion to see direct application of their findings to practice.

Second, although most researchers are concerned to have their findings used by school practitioners, they frequently conceive of the task as that of delivering consumable products to users. Most literature on innovation and program implementation (Cf. for example Gross, 1979) appears to implicitly accept the inevitability of this model. Even the recent attempts to develop the notion of "mutual adaption: as a model for successful innovation, is at basis concerned with the problems inherent in incorporating information from outside sources into and existing process. (Cf. Meara, 1979, Berman and McClauglin 1977.)

Scant attention has been paid to models of cooperative research in which the researcher is one and the same with the user and even less to the crucial issue of respect for the practitioner as he is. This latter concern does not mean that the practitioner in this cooperative relationship will not change, indeed the approach suggested here might be one of the most natural means available to foster important and basic changes is not an a priori condition to successful understanding and incorporation of research findings, and hence does not become an insurmountable psychological barrier to establishing productive relationships.

Our experience with Ethnographic Monitoring not only suggests the feasibility of an approach to research based on a truely cooperative mode, one that builds on the implicit skills and knowledge practitioners need for the routine discharge of their profession, but one that holds great promise for addressing particularly thorny, longstanding issues of the research-practice relationship.

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